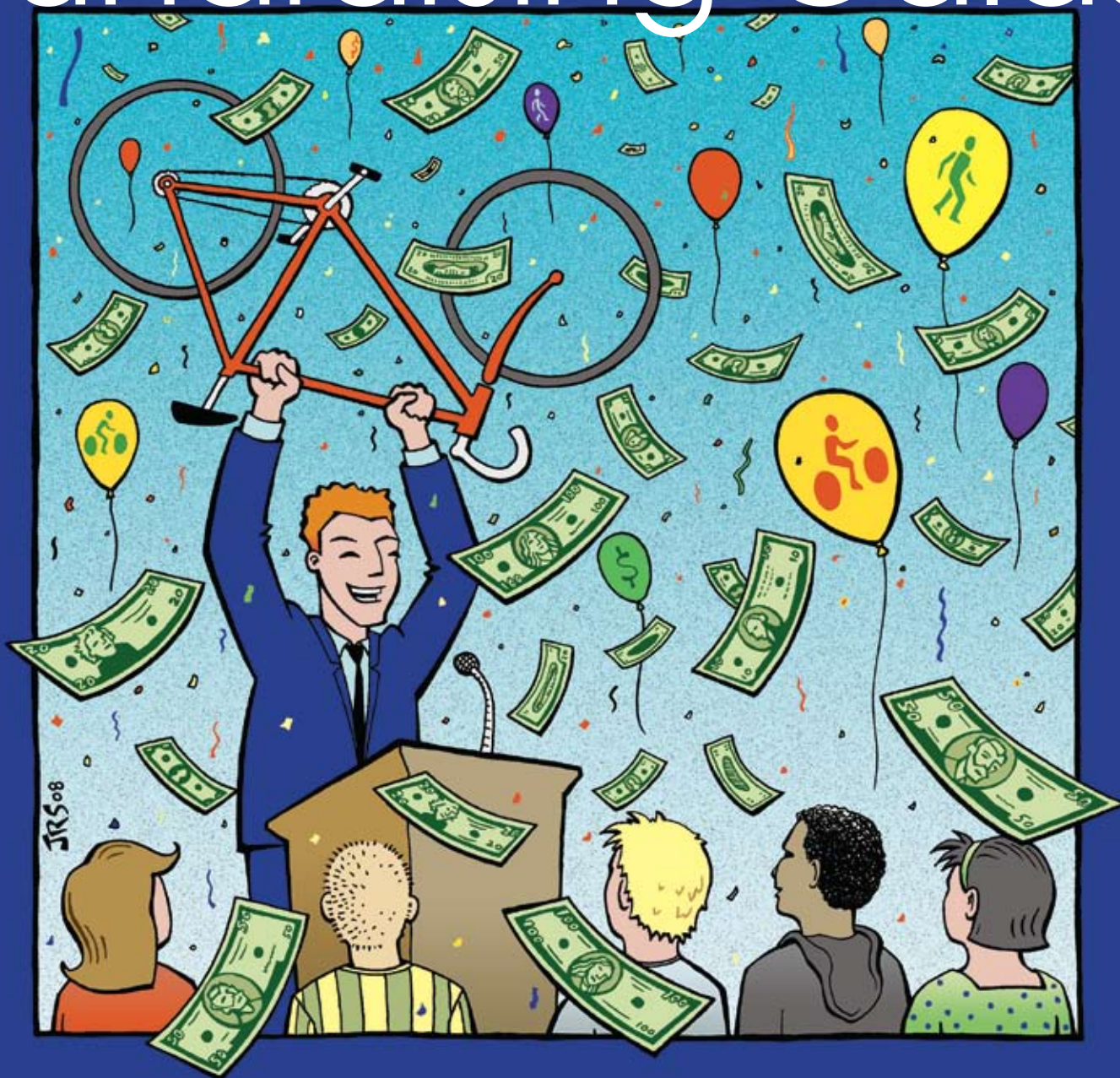


ALLIANCE FOR BIKING & WALKING'S GUIDE TO

# Fundraising Galas



Produced by Alliance for Biking & Walking | Sue Knaup | Gayle Cummins Stallings | David Crites





# Guide to Fundraising Galas

3rd Edition, 2009

Produced by Alliance for Biking and Walking

Sue Knaup  
Gayle Cummins Stallings  
David Crites

Cover Illustration by Jim Swanson

Editors:

2<sup>nd</sup> Edition: Kristen Steele

3<sup>rd</sup> Edition: Julie Boddorff

Cover Illustration:

Jim Swanson,

[www.heckleandjive.com](http://www.heckleandjive.com)

Layout:

Kristen Steele

(1<sup>st</sup> Edition) Copyright © 2004 by the Alliance for Biking and Walking

(2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) © 2008

(3<sup>rd</sup> Edition) © 2009

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced by any means, graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including photographing, recording, taping or by any information storage retrieval system without the written permission of the publisher except in the case of examples provided for replication and brief quotations embodied in critical articles and review.

# Contents

Acknowledgements.....	3
Introduction.....	5
What Is the Alliance?.....	5
Why This Guide?.....	5
Research/Background.....	5
1: What Is a Fundraising Gala?.....	7
Types of Fundraising Galas.....	7
What Is Not a Fundraising Ride?.....	8
Why Do a Fundraising Gala?.....	8
Galas at a Glance.....	9
Before You Start Planning.....	11
Example Galas.....	12
2: Are You Ready to Take On a Fundraising Gala?.....	19
Getting Your Bord on Board.....	19
What Jobs Do You Need to Fill?.....	19
Ethics.....	20
A Few Words of Wisdom.....	22
The Event-Ability Quiz.....	22
3: The Gala's Program.....	23
Setting the Gala's Program.....	23
A Few Winner Fundraising Ideas.....	23
Not Every Idea Works.....	25
Emcee and Speakers.....	26
Awards.....	26
How To Get Musicians/Celebrities.....	26
Auctions.....	28
What Should You Auction Off? .....	28
Where Do You Get Items to Auction?.....	29
What Are the Different Types of Auctions?.....	30
How Many Items Can You Auction? .....	31
How Many People?.....	31
What Else Should Happen at an Auction?.....	31
Sample Silent Auction Check In Instructions.....	32
Sample Silent Auction Instructions.....	33
Sample Silent Auction Check Out Instructions.....	34
Who Should Be the Auctioneer?.....	35
What Are the Problems with Auctions?.....	35
Multiple Auction Types in One Event.....	37
Procurement.....	37
Auction Catalogue.....	37
Storage and Logistics Before, During, and After the Event.....	37
4: Budgeting, Sponsorships, and Donations.....	41
Return on Investment.....	41
Watch Your Fundraising ROI.....	41
Ways to Improve Your ROI.....	42
Why Is Your ROI Important?.....	42
Getting Things for Free.....	42
Sample Auction Items Solicitation Letter.....	43
Sample Sponsorship Spreadsheet.....	44

How to Get and Reward Sponsors.....	44
Multi-Level Sponsorships.....	45
Sample Sponsorship Letter.....	46
Sample Sponsorship Opportunities Flyer, Abbreviated.....	47
Auction Items Tax-Deductibility.....	48
Major Sponsorships.....	49
Deductibility.....	50
Receipts for In-Kind Donations of Services.....	51
Receipts for In-Kind Donations of Goods.....	51
Corporate Donations.....	51
Raffle Tickets.....	52
Other Laws and Regulations.....	52
Why Events Can Fail.....	52
The Mathematics of Raising Money.....	54
<b>5: Logistics.....</b>	<b>57</b>
Location and Setting.....	57
Where Are Galas Held?.....	57
Date and Time.....	57
Sample Gala Task Schedule.....	58
Space Planning and Flow.....	59
Decorations and Table Set-ups.....	59
Task Scheduling.....	59
Sample Day of Event Schedule.....	61
Volunteers and Staff.....	64
Insurance.....	66
Food Options.....	66
Beverages.....	67
Audiovisuals.....	67
<b>6: Guests.....</b>	<b>68</b>
Admission or not and Pricing Strategies.....	68
Signing Up New Members.....	68
Pre-Registration.....	69
Check-in/Registration.....	69
Check-out (Required if Doing Auctions).....	69
<b>8: Getting More Out of the Event.....</b>	<b>70</b>
New Contacts, Too!.....	70
More Money, Too!.....	71
Publicity and Media, Too!.....	75
Sample Press Release.....	76
<b>9: After the Event.....</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>Appendix 1: Other Sources of Information.....</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Appendix 2: The Event-Ability Quiz.....</b>	<b>81</b>
<b>Appendix 3: Alliance and NBDA Survey.....</b>	<b>85</b>

# Acknowledgements

Using the results from surveys gathered from Alliance member organizations, we boiled down these best practices in fundraising events into clear recommendations and models that can be followed by all Alliance members.

The Alliance wishes to thank the many people and organizations who contributed to the development of this new *Guide* with unwavering effort, investing countless hours to create the highest quality fundraising gala model for bicycle and pedestrian advocacy organizations. Thanks to these Alliance organizations:

- Alabama Bicycle Coalition
- Bicycle Victoria, Australia
- Bicycle Alliance of Washington
- Bicycle Coalition of Greater Philadelphia
- Bicycle Coalition of Maine
- Bicycle Colorado
- Bicycle Federation of Wisconsin
- Bicycle Transportation Alliance
- BikeWalk Virginia
- California Bicycle Coalition
- Capital Bike and Walk Society
- Chicagoland Bicycle Federation
- East Bay Bicycle Coalition
- Florida Bicycle Association
- Friends of Pathways
- Georgia Bikes!
- Hawaii Bicycling League
- Indiana Bicycle Coalition
- Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition
- League of Illinois Bicyclists
- League of Michigan Bicyclists
- Local Motion
- Marin County Bicycle Coalition
- New York Bicycling Coalition
- One Less Car
- Prescott Alternative Transportation
- Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates
- San Francisco Bicycle Coalition
- San Luis Obispo County Bicycle Coalition
- Santa Barbara Bicycle Coalition
- Sonoma County Bicycle Coalition
- St. Louis Regional Bicycle Federation
- Teton Valley Trails and Pathways
- Texas Bicycle Coalition
- Transportation Alternatives
- Walk/Bike Nashville
- Washington Area Bicycle Association

Of course, being among the best fundraising galas has many rewards. Sincere thanks to the executive directors and staff whose organizations were chosen as one of the five gala examples. They patiently took our questions, phone calls and even proofed the final version to make sure we got it right. These are:

- Catherine Ciarlo, Bicycle Transportation Alliance
- Barbara Culp, Bicycle Alliance of Washington
- Dan Grunig, Bicycle Colorado
- Debbie Hubsmith, Marin County Bicycle Coalition
- Leah Shahum, San Francisco Bicycle Coalition

Special thanks for the advice given by management experts, John Canon and Steve Gavenas, for asking the right questions at the right time to help us define the scope and magnitude of this guide and future guides.

John Coomer's valuable expertise with nonprofits outside of bicycling and walking helped raise the fundraising bar by finding the non-Alliance gala example for us to use.

Ken Wyman's *Guide to Special Events Fundraising* encourages nonprofits to copy and adapt portions. We have done so in several instances.

Of course, the *Alliance for Biking and Walking Guide to Fundraising Galas* would not have been possible without the generous financial assistance from Planet Bike and the National Bicycle Dealers Association who believe in the power of effective change through Alliance's 50 States/50 Cities Project.

Finally, Sue Knaup's vision, support, guidance, and belief in creating replicable models for Alliance members carried this effort to its successful fruition.

If we forgot anyone, please forgive us and let us know. Then watch for your name in the next update.

—Gayle Cummins Stallings and David Crites

This publication was made possible by the generous support of Planet Bike and the National Bicycle Dealers Association.



# Introduction

## What Is the Alliance for Biking and Walking?

The Alliance is the national coalition of state and local bicycle and pedestrian advocacy organizations. At 135 strong in 49 states and Canada, the Alliance's member organizations employ more than 210 full-time staff and reach a combined dues-paying membership of 100,000 people. The Alliance's mission is to unite and strengthen these organizations as we help create new ones where they are most needed.

## Why This Guide?

Fundraising galas have been successful and substantive income producers, signature occasions, and membership growing tools for a few Alliance member organizations for several years. Those organizations realize however that there is always room for improvement. On the other hand, those Alliance member organizations curious about or considering staging their own fundraising galas have been daunted by the fact that they would either have to bug experienced gala organizers for information, advice, and assistance or embark blindly on their own.

Through its 50 States/50 Cities Project, the Alliance set out to try to help both experienced and fledging gala organizers by compiling and disseminating information from the successful galas, from non-bicycling and walking advocacy galas, and from other more general special event resources. This information is presented in this model using four formats—the main body text; a gala comparison table (Galas At A Glance); the one-page summaries of six gala examples (Example Gala One-Pagers); and sample gala staging materials and templates. This *Guide* will assist bicycle and pedestrian advocacy organizations in growing and creating profitable galas that support their efforts.

## Research/Background

This *Guide to Fundraising Galas* is one of many products of Alliance's 50 States/50 Cities Project that has a goal of effective and sustainable bicycle and pedestrian advocacy organizations in all 50 states and the 50 most-populous U.S. cities. This project was launched with support from Planet Bike and the National Bicycle Dealers Association (NBDA).

Alliance and NBDA member surveys in March 2004 focused on organizational promotion and campaign needs and successes (see Appendix 3 for the Alliance member survey questions). For a few

organizations, galas were found to be quite successful in raising funds and/or increasing members though all were looking for ideas and examples to improve. Galas were also an area of interest for a number of organizations without such an activity. Thirty-four surveys were submitted, either in response requests by e-mail, or during a one-on-one interview by telephone. A selection committee, comprised of three members of the Alliance Board and the Alliance's Executive Director, reviewed all of the surveys. They prioritized answers to best serve the needs of Alliance member organizations and to create three categories for the first Alliance models: 1) fundraising galas; 2) fundraising rides; and 3) complete streets campaigns.

A number of organizations with "successful" galas were plumbed for additional information. They were selected due to the bottom line success of their event (the gross/net income ratio). The final set includes the Bicycle Alliance of Washington, Bicycle Colorado, Bicycle Transportation Alliance (Oregon), Marin County Bicycle Coalition, and San Francisco Bicycle Coalition. We greatly appreciate the activities and assistance of these organizations. This is the last time that you will see their names however. This anonymity protects their events and encourages interested calls and e-mails to go to the Alliance rather than to them.

The content in this document will refer to these organizations and their events as example galas "Example Gala A", "Example B", and so on through "Gala E." As with all Alliance models we will continually update this one so that it reflects the most successful fundraising galas. If you have any questions or comments please contact the Alliance at [info@peoplepoweredmovement.org](mailto:info@peoplepoweredmovement.org).

In addition to finding successful gala examples among Alliance member organizations, we also included one example of a highly successful fundraising gala that is produced by a non-Alliance organization. The event is a Special Olympics gala and we refer to this example as "Example Gala F".

Generic fundraising gala and special events related information was gathered from non-bicycling and walking specific sources too. Most notable among these sources is the *Guide to Special Events Fundraising* by Ken Wyman, which encourages nonprofits to copy and adapt portions (which was done in several instances herein).

# 1: What is a Fundraising Gala?

While it is very subjective, the Alliance feels the need to give some definition, with our member perspectives in mind, as to what a fundraising gala is and what slight variations exist in such a definition. We also feel obligated to give our thoughts on what is not a fundraising gala as well as some winning and losing ideas.

A fundraising gala (from the Alliance member perspective) is a big, anticipated, off-the-bike event that is held once a year, sometimes kicking off or ending the “normal” local cycling and walking season. It has a large number of guests, many of them members of that organization. It is one of, if not the biggest, fundraising and new member drive activities of the organization. It gets good media coverage and dignitaries participation. And it typically has some type of awards, recognition, and/or entertainment component. The majority of an event’s costs are normally born by sponsorship and entrance fees, with the real fundraising coming from one or more types of auctions.

## Types of Fundraising Galas

While the variations on fundraising galas may seem fairly basic and minor, they can result in big event differences in the planning, finances, resources, and execution of the event. As you can imagine, it matters tremendously if a gala, for example, has a sit down gourmet dinner or *hors d'oeuvres*; a single live auction or three silent auctions; hires a professional auctioneer or not; has an admission fee of \$60 or is free to members; has a band and dancing or forgoes that for something else like a bicycle art exhibit; is held in a ballroom or a community center; uses the occasion to make a special appeal or places envelopes on the table to generate more dollars. Finding the right combination for your organization can reduce the risk and increase the fun. Keep in mind that even though galas usually make money, some organizations find that the financial return simply does not justify the number of staff and volunteer hours (one reason why some turn to outside resources).

## **What is Not a Fundraising Gala**

The following may be fundraisers, but they are not fundraising galas: an Internet auction (though that could be a component of a gala), a bicycle swap meet, a car or bike wash, sales efforts ( i.e. candy bars, cookies, gift wrap, calendars, sporting event ticket, and so on), a yard sale, an end of the multi-day ride party, your annual and/or year ending public meeting, a loaned bar or restaurant for a night event, an extravaganza (i.e. benefit concerts, cruises, and staged major sporting events), a “stay at home” non-event, an educational workshop or conference, a food fair or wine tasting.

## **Galas at a Glance**

On the following page you will find a spreadsheet titled Galas At A Glance. It provides basic information about the five Alliance members and the one non-Alliance member example galas which were discussed in the earlier Research/Background section. The information is not comprehensive to what each gala does for their event, but provides a few salient cross-referencing points.

The information is from the most recent year that each event was held. Keep in mind that the organizers are always experimenting. Some may use a different venue as their event evolves and/or grows. Some have tried different days of the week. The mix and number of live and silent auctions is subject to change year to year. The Alliance looks forward to updating this model with the results of these improvements and more.

For the few fields that are blank, the information is not currently available. The abbreviations and notations should be self-explanatory.

## **Why Do a Fundraising Gala?**

The reasons to do a fundraising gala are basically three-fold: raise funds, increase membership, and have something fun or different for your members, supporters, and community to participate in. Galas can also be vehicles for accomplishing public relations desires like increasing an organization’s exposure and profile, highlighting a particular issue or need, and/or complimenting the activities of individuals and organizations.

## **What Can You Gain?**

Cold cash is an obvious goal of any fundraising gala. Here are some variations you might solicit.

## Galas at a Glance

	EXAMPLE GALA					
	A	B	C	D	E	F
<b>When &amp; Where</b>						
Years Held	> 10	> 5	> 5	> 5	< 5	> 10
Month	mid Nov.	early Dec.	mid Nov.	early Mar.	May	late June
Day	Saturday	Sunday	Saturday	Saturday	Saturday	Thursday
Time	6:00-10:00 pm	5:30-10:30 pm	6:00-10:00 pm	5:30-9:30 pm	7:00-10:30 pm	7:30-8:45 am
Facility	fraternal hall	art center	comm. center	ballroom	antiques building	conven. center
Facility Cost	\$1,700	\$800	pay	\$1,000	donated	
Start Working On It	11.5 mo. out	6 mo. Out	6 mo. out	5 mo. out	5 mo. out	11.5 mo. out
Promotion Activities & Impact	big	fair	fair	fair	huge	direct&targeted
<b>What</b>						
Live Auction	yes	yes	no	yes	no	yes
Silent Auction	yes (2)	yes (1)	yes (1)	yes (1)	yes (3)	no
Live Auction Items	30 anything	spectrum	n/a	10 spectrum	n/a	120 table boxes
Silent Auction Items	200 ?	75% bike-centric	bikes +	140 spectrum	160 bike-centric	n/a
Auction Catalogue	yes & on-line	on-line afterward	none	yes	on-line	n/a
Items Left Over From Auctions	to vol's & raffles	buy at HQ	to vol's & reward	case-by-case	sell & rewards	none
Auction Miscellaneous	own software	bike art auction	procure Interbike	custom DB	Access DB	120 table capt.s
Emcee	no	volunteer	yes	yes	yes	nat'l newsanchor
Speakers/Presentations	none	no	yes	yes	yes	yes
Celebrities/dignitaries	elected officials	yes	yes	yes	yes	sports celebrity
Awards	none	none	none	yes	yes	none
Music/Dancing	yes/no	yes/yes	yes/yes	yes/no	no/no	no
Dinner	served	light dinner	buffet	gourmet	hors d'oeuvres	light breakfast
Drinks	beer & wine	Fat Tire beer	beer & wine	b&w +pay drink	beer & wine	no
Bars	2 w/2 per each	2 hosted	non-hosted	1 +table service	2 w/2 per each	no
<b>Income Related</b>						
Non-Member Admission Fee	\$40	\$20	\$20	\$60	\$30	invitation only
Member Admission Fee	\$40	\$5	free	\$60	\$25	all RSVP
Free/Scholarship Tickets To	none	volunteers	govt. staff	select persons	select persons	n/a
Personalized Table Price	\$320 for 8	no	no	\$600 for 10	n/a	n/a
Ticket Miscellaneous	pre-sold-out	no advance	onsite childcare	child & vol. tiks	can buy online	n/a
Number Of Attendees	300+	600-800	500	365	250	1,300
Captures X New Members	50	100	100	not goal/tracked	12	not the goal
Sponsors	2 levels	5 levels	3 levels	7 at 2 levels	3 bike-centric	multi-level
Sponsor \$	\$500 & 1,000	up to \$5,000		\$7,000	\$1,000	
Other Fundraising At Event	special appeal +	crafts/raffle/sales	raffle & appeal	has varied yr-yr	none	special appeal
<b>People</b>						
Event Coordinator	volunteer	paid (200 hrs)	paid (\$2,500)	staff	vol. board mem.	vol. event chair
Procurement Coordinator	paid (\$3,000)	is event coord.		staff	staff	vol. comm.
Auctioneer	paid (\$1,000)	volunteer	n/a	yes (\$400)	n/a	120 table capt.s
Caterer	yes (\$17/per)	yes (\$2.5K)	yes (\$?)	in house (\$21/p)	yes	yes
Musician's	no	bands	band	musician & CD	DJ	no
Photographer	yes	intern	vol. professional	vol. professional	no	yes
Other Costs	linens & all \$2K	firemarshal \$350		sound sys \$400	DJ \$200	
Staff, Number	2	2		2	1	4 or 5
Staff, Time/Dollars	140 hrs	100 hrs	220 hrs	450 hrs/\$6,700	520 hrs	
Volunteers, Number	40-50	40	30	50	31	150
Volunteers, Hours		100 hrs	180	150 hrs	866 hrs	
Biggest Board Responsibility	procure & host	procure & host	staffing event	procure & tiks	procure/tiks/host	
<b>Bottom Line</b>						
Gross Income	\$72,000	\$30,000	\$25,000	\$55,000	\$32,900	\$400,000
Cost	\$20,000	\$9,000	\$10,000	\$24,000	\$16,300	\$100,000
Net	\$52,000	\$21,000	\$15,000	\$31,000	\$16,600	\$300,000
Return on Investment (ROI)	3.6	3.3	2.5	2.3	2.0	4.0

- cash
- checks
- money-orders
- credit card donations
- in-kind donations of goods and services
- post-dated donations
- pledges

The important thing to remember about cash is that once you spend it, it's gone! A good fundraising gala must provide an opportunity to gain more than just funds. In fact, if that's all it raises, it may not be a success in the long-term. The money will finance the important work of your organization. All too soon, though, the income is exhausted and more is needed. The needs of effective organizations are endless and potential event funds are limited. Fortunately, events can produce more than just money.

## **Warm Fuzzies: Good Feelings That Open Doors**

Fundraising galas also communicate an image and information about your organization and your projects. These are called "warm fuzzies." They're intangible, but very real. If this is done well, it makes it easier to raise money again the next time. Warm fuzzies are more than public relations. The list below contains some of the possibilities.

- publicity
- image
- contact with people
- credibility
- education
- motivation
- increased commitment
- good community relations

Too often, however, warm fuzzies are used as an excuse. After an event that doesn't raise much money, the organizers might console themselves and try to mollify their board by pointing out all the warm fuzzy results. They may be over-estimating the reality.

Warm fuzzies aren't an accidental by-product. You must plan on developing them from the beginning. It is also easy to measure the results. You may have shown your new slide show about your projects, for example. Did people learn anything new? Were you preaching to the converted?

Try a simple before-and-after test. Decide five or ten points you want people to know. Before the show begins, ask them to fill in a 60

second multiple-choice quiz. Afterwards, have them do the same quiz again.

Did they score high marks before they even saw the show? Then it's too simplistic for them. Have the scores improved? You've got a winner! Did the scores go downhill? Yes, it really happens. That means you've confused them.

Here's another common misconception about warm fuzzies: overrating media coverage. You may have had your group's name in the media, but will people remember it? Was the name linked to positive values that enhance your image or clarify your mission? Was it in media that your most important donors respect? Don't measure your media exposure in column-inches or seconds of airtime alone. Quality is more important than quantity.

## **Hot Flashes: Raise More in the Long Run**

Even more important than warm fuzzies is the enhanced ability to raise more money in the long run. Call these "hot flashes." Here are a few of the possibilities.

- 'repeat-ability' of good ideas
- leadership training
- new volunteers
- re-invigorated volunteers and staff
- names and addresses of new donors to ask again
- diversified sources of funding

An event is worth more than the money it raises if it makes it easier to raise still more. For example, will the people who participated do so again? Did you get their names and addresses? Do you have a plan in place to contact them again soon?

After an event that's done right, the donors and even the volunteers feel energized. They look forward to the next event, instead of dreading it. The organizers have learned new skills, made new contacts, and feel rewarded. Your human resources should feel invested, not spent.

## **Before You Start Planning**

Fundraising galas are not easy. They take lots of work to make happen and be successful. Most organizations begin preparations two weeks after the previous one is over so look ahead one full year when you begin your planning. Some organizations start their event promotions with the just-completed event's thank-you letters.

## EXAMPLE GALA A

# Silent and Live Auction

# Sit Down Dinner

<b>Gross income:</b>	\$72,000
<b>Net profit:</b>	\$52,000
<b>No. of years:</b>	10 +
<b>No. of guests:</b>	300 (event sells out every year; moving to larger facility in 2005)
<b>Type of venue:</b>	Fraternal Hall
<b>Venue rental:</b>	\$1,700
<b>Date:</b>	November of each year so as not to compete with similar groups.
<b>Admission:</b>	\$40 per person or table of 8 (goal to have ticket price cover costs means raising the price in 2005) / nearly all tickets sold in advance.
<b>Food/beverage:</b>	Sit down dinner with complimentary beer and wine. <sup>1</sup>
<b>Other rentals:</b>	Linens, flatware, dishes and round tables to create a polished and professional experience adds an additional several thousand dollars.
<b>Auctioneer:</b>	Hire professional at \$1,000. <sup>2</sup>
<b>Procurement:</b>	Hire Procurement Coordinator at \$3,000.
<b>Volunteers:</b>	Core group of 40-50 volunteers doing about everything. Soon after the event there is a volunteers party (dinner & beer) at a local pub.
<b>Task/duties:</b>	Written job descriptions with hours and time to report for duty.
<b>Staff time:</b>	Two staff at 140 hours.
<b>Auction process:</b>	Have their own software that does everything electronically from registration to check-out
<b>Live auction:</b>	Thirty items generate more than 50 percent of the event revenue.
<b>Silent auction:</b>	Two separate silent auctions throughout the night features 100 items each (e.g. a bicycle ride with a restaurant gift certificate or a bed and breakfast with a bottle of wine).
<b>Other fundraising:</b>	Take three breaks during live auction—one for new and renewal memberships; one for a special appeal of a unique item such as fund a mile of trails, safe routes to school, or pay for a particular lobbying effort; and one for a mini-auction of one item at each table.
<b>Follow-up:</b>	All donors and guests receive a thank-you letter (and donation form) 2 weeks after auction asking them to budget for next year.
<b>Comments:</b>	The hardest part of the auction is procurement. For many years the procurement coordination fell to the auction chair and made their job even more difficult. By having a "hired" gun procurement coordinator, the person gets paid to make all the follow-up calls and "bug" the board members to turn in procured items. Serve plenty of free alcohol and lots of it. Limit the program (introductions, organization highlights, and thank you's). Create a party atmosphere and have a lot of fun but do not forget the special appeal.

1. Catering is the largest expense averaging \$17 per person. Beer and wine donated (two kegs and 10+ cases of wine).
2. Board voted unanimously to pay for a professional "name brand" auctioneer (\$1,000) after working with a free or reduced rate auctioneer.

**EXAMPLE GALA B**  
**Silent and Live Auction**  
**Light Dinner**

Gross income:	\$30,000
Net profit:	\$21,000
No. of years:	>5
No. of guests:	600–800
Type of venue:	Art Center
Date:	Sunday in mid-December. <sup>3</sup>
Admission:	\$5 members/ \$20 non-members
Tickets:	All tickets are sold at the door / no advance tickets.
New members:	100
Food/beverage:	Light dinner and Fat Tire beer.
Volunteers:	50 people at 100 hours.
Staff time:	100 hours
Live auction:	Yes
Silent auction:	Yes
Bike art auction:	Hold a bike art show and live auction on those items too.
Sales tables:	Have tables for selling craft items and organizational items.
Procurement:	Event Organizer leads procurement, paid 200 hours, starts in July.
Music:	Live music provided by three bands.
Sponsors:	Four levels ranging from \$100 to Event Sponsor at \$5,000.
Follow-up:	Within one week after the event, all donors receive a thank-you letter and the top 10-20 donors receive a personal phone call.
Comments:	<p>Any items not sold at auction may be viewed on-line afterwards and purchased in person at the organization's headquarters. An intern was responsible for taking photographs and highlights of the party, plus posting a short streaming movie documenting the event on the organization's web site.</p> <p>The craft table remains one of the highlights of this annual holiday party and silent auction. The items include, but are not limited to crafts made for bicyclists, by bicyclists, or crafts made of bicycle parts. Sponsors, plus over forty established and emerging local artists, donate everything from bike gear and artwork to gift certificates, cultural events and dinners.</p> <p>The first round of calls to potential sponsors starts in mid-July. The Event Organizer produces a timeline with weekly goals for sponsorship commitments, dollar amounts and who should make the call.</p>

3. Changed day of event in 2003 to Sunday evening instead of Thursday. Many members reported they had too many scheduling conflicts to attend the party on a weekday.

**EXAMPLE GALA C**  
**Silent Auction/Year-end Appeal**  
**Food Buffet**

<b>Gross income:</b>	\$25,000 (silent auction only; \$46,000 if add the year-end appeal letter)
<b>Net profit:</b>	\$15,000 (silent auction only)
<b>No. of years:</b>	>5
<b>No. of guests:</b>	500
<b>Type of venue:</b>	Community Center
<b>Date:</b>	Saturday before Thanksgiving in November.
<b>Admission:</b>	Free for current members; non-members join at the door for \$20.
<b>Children:</b>	Provide onsite supervised childcare.
<b>New members:</b>	100 new or renewing members.
<b>Food/beverage:</b>	Buffet and no-host bar.
<b>Event organizer:</b>	Hire professional at \$2,500.
<b>Volunteers:</b>	30 volunteers at 6 hrs. each during event.
<b>Staff time:</b>	400 hours
<b>Silent auction:</b>	Yes: Working to make auction bigger in 2004.
<b>Raffle:</b>	Yes: Tickets on sale at coffee shops for chance on mountain bike, transportation bike and hotel accommodations.
<b>Guest speakers:</b>	Yes: Two guest speakers with slide shows in 2003.
<b>Emcee:</b>	Executive Director and Board President.
<b>Music:</b>	Live jazz trio during cocktail hour and dinner and dance music.
<b>Other fundraising:</b>	Send year-end annual report with donation request prior to event.
<b>2003 Sponsorship:</b>	Several bike shops listed as \$500 sponsors.
<b>2004 Sponsorship:</b>	Goal to raise \$25,000 by offering limited number of Titanium (\$5,000–\$10,000), Steel (\$2,500–\$4,999) and Aluminum (\$1,000–\$2,400); began soliciting prospective sponsors in May.
<b>Media hits:</b>	Depends if elected official scheduled to speak; event previously listed in newspaper as "Best Bet" for the week.
<b>Comments:</b>	<p>The practice of giving complimentary tickets to government agency employees helps boost attendance and gives the bureaucrats an opportunity to witness a high-profile event with member demographics of ages 18–69, fitness-oriented, upscale and well-educated professionals. The "free" party for members (can also be viewed as a member appreciation party) presents a great hook especially since all members receive the annual report and year-end special appeal prior to the event. A special request is made during the event to raise more money for the year-end appeal.</p> <p>Some of the procurement of auction items takes place annually at Interbike. They send advance letters to companies and build relationships with representatives. Procured items are driven back.</p>

## EXAMPLE GALA D

## Silent and Live Auction with Award Ceremony Gourmet Dinner

Gross income:	\$55,000
Net profit:	\$31,000
No. of years:	>5
No. of guests:	350 (moving to larger venue in 2005)
Type of venue:	Ballroom
Venue rental:	\$1,000 (nonprofit rate)
Date:	Saturday in early March.
Admission:	\$60/member and non-member or table of ten for \$600.
Food/beverage:	Gourmet dinner with complimentary beer and wine. <sup>4</sup>
Emcee:	Elected official.
Sound system:	\$350 rental fee.
Music:	Member donates time to play live music during silent auction; play CD jazz mix during dinner and after auction.
Award ceremony:	Solicit nominations from members for annual awards for individuals and lifetime achievement.
Auctioneer:	Hire professional at \$400. <sup>5</sup>
Procurement:	Staff
Volunteers:	50
Staff time:	Two staff at 450 hours/\$6,700.
Auction software:	Custom database.
Silent auction:	140 items
Live auction:	10 items
Special appeal:	Varies each year if special appeal is made.
Sponsors:	Seven sponsors at two different levels for a total of \$7,000.
Comments:	Hiring a professional auctioneer for the first time in 2004 was a worthwhile investment. It made a big difference in the energy and bottom line of the auction. A committee is formed six months prior to the event to work on auction item solicitation, venue rental, consider changes to the menu and program and start nomination process for advocacy awards. The custom database tracks items, donors, value and minimum bid while performing other calculations as needed, as well as formats the display sheets, bid sheets and gift certificates. The database can also track volunteers, event expenses and ticket registration.

4. Used in-house caterer at cost of \$21 per person. Total catering bill, including alcohol venue provided, was \$8,940. Event venue charges corkage fee for any alcohol the organization brings in. Beer donation was on a "match"—buy one case, get one case free. Pay full price for wine.

5. Hired a professional auctioneer for the first time in 2004. Gross income increased by \$20,000 from previous year while net income increased from \$15,000 in 2003 to \$31,000 in 2004.

**EXAMPLE GALA E**  
**Silent Auction**  
**Hors d'oeuvres**

<b>Gross income:</b>	\$32,900
<b>Net profit:</b>	\$16,600
<b>No. of years:</b>	< 5
<b>No. of guests:</b>	250
<b>Type of venue:</b>	Antique warehouse (changed from bicycle retailer store in 2003)
<b>Date:</b>	Saturday night in May
<b>Admission:</b>	\$25 members/\$30 non-members
<b>Food/beverage:</b>	Heavy hors d'oeuvres with beer and wine. <sup>6</sup>
<b>Award ceremony:</b>	Presented Advocacy awards to State Senator and House Representative who helped pass recent legislation. Did not have keynote speaker in 2004.
<b>Celebrities:</b>	Board member enlisted numerous cycling celebrities to attend
<b>Auctioneer:</b>	Will add auctioneer in 2005 for specialty items
<b>Procurement:</b>	Collected 160 items for silent auction
<b>Volunteers:</b>	31 volunteers at 866 hours
<b>Staff time:</b>	One full-time staff for three months at 520 hours
<b>Silent auction:</b>	Three silent auctions, each with their own separate sponsorships and with three different closing times.
<b>Live auction:</b>	Will do small live auction in 2005 for specialty items
<b>Promotion:</b>	Distributed 5,000 postcards to members and bike shops; started advertising three months prior to event in newsletter, e-newsletter and website; received in-kind donation from national bicycling magazine to place advertisement. Received post-event media coverage with article and photos in bicycling industry magazine
<b>Comments:</b>	<p>Between sponsorships and ticket sales, the event broke even. The profit came from the silent auction. The highest ticket item, a trip to Athens Greece with a retail value of \$7,000, went for \$4,500. In 2005, the gala will add a small live auction for higher end items and hire an auctioneer at ten percent of what they sell.</p> <p>The room set-up with tables and just a few chairs meant people did not have the opportunity to sit in a corner and they had to move around to meet people. Getting cycling celebrities to an event in May proved tougher due to race season.</p> <p>The biggest struggle is to get people to pay at the end of the night. Need to provide more volunteer training on how to process the payments.</p>

6. Beer is donated and wine is purchased at cost.

**EXAMPLE GALA F**  
**Live Table Auction**  
**Breakfast**

<b>Gross income:</b>	\$400,000
<b>Net profit:</b>	\$300,000
<b>No. of years:</b>	> 10
<b>No. of guests:</b>	1,300
<b>Type of venue:</b>	Convention center
<b>Date:</b>	Thursday morning in late June.
<b>Admission:</b>	Invitation only; no admission fee.
<b>Food/beverage:</b>	Light breakfast.
<b>Auctioneer:</b>	(120) Table Captains solicit bids and pledges at their table of ten.
<b>Procurement:</b>	Volunteer committee and staff.
<b>Volunteers:</b>	150+
<b>Staff time:</b>	Five full-time staff.
<b>Emcee:</b>	National news anchor.
<b>Speaker/presenter:</b>	Yes: A half dozen presenters do five-minute messages to "tug on heart strings". Show video on latest org. developments.
<b>Celebrities:</b>	Yes: Sports celebrity.
<b>Live auction:</b>	The Table Captain solicits bids from the 9-10 guests personally invited to bid on the one box on the table. The box contains a wide range of prizes from a coffee cup to gift certificates, but only a few of the boxes have a high dollar prize.
<b>Other fundraising:</b>	Special appeal after presentation and video.
<b>Comments:</b>	<p>In less than 75-minutes, on a weekday morning, the event raises \$400,000, with \$75,000 coming from the table box auction while the rest comes from the special appeal request. After hearing heart-felt stories and watching compelling videos on how this organization impacts so many individual lives, donors are asked to make a contribution during a special appeal.</p> <p>The Table Captains conduct their individual table auctions as one of the last items on the agenda. The live auction only takes five minutes. The main responsibility of the Table Captain is to fill the table and invite nine other people who will be willing to write a check to support the fundraiser. The success of the event strongly depends upon the commitment of the Table Captain to fill the table with people who will make a contribution.</p>

## **Example Galas**

On the previous pages you will find a one-page overview for each of the five Alliance member example galas and the one non-Alliance example gala discussed earlier in the Research/Background and Galas At A Glance sections. Again, the information is not a comprehensive look at each example. Each one-pager does provide more detail than the comparison spreadsheet and does highlight some of each event's unique points. Note too that the information may not be from the galas' most recent years.

# 2: Are You Ready to Take on a Fundraising Gala?

## **Getting Your Board on Board**

What it takes to get a board to accept a fundraising gala project, largely depends on your board's makeup and the bylaws as well as the organization's goals and past event experiences. Some boards might want to know what specifically will be required of them (one of the example galas requires table hosting of its board and another requires them to be the primary admission ticket sellers). Some boards might want an entire, detailed plan laid out before they'll sign off. Others might be content knowing about the successes of other Alliance organizations (the Galas At A Glance, page 9 and the example galas, pages 12-17) maybe be enough to give a go-ahead). It may be simplistic, but know your facts and know your board before touting galas.

## **What Jobs Do You Need to Fill?**

There's nothing more frustrating than discovering at the last minute that you forgot to fill a crucial job. There are hundreds of possible roles in any type of event. Here is a partial list that you may find useful in organizing your special event (see Sample Day of Event Schedule, page 61).

- Overall Event Coordinator
- Beer/Wine/Liquor Coordinator
- Clean up Crew

- Decorations Coordinator
- Emergency Crew (in case of no-shows)
- Entertainment Coordinator
- Financial Management/Accounting/Banking
- Food Coordinator
- Graphic Designer: ensure coordinated theme
- Guests/Head Table Coordinator
- Media Liaison
- Parking Organizer
- Production Coordinator (i.e. printed program, invitations, tickets, posters)
- Person to get licenses, permits, check laws
- Program Committee
- Publicity Co-coordinator
- Security people
- Signs/Directions Aid
- Solicitors of in-kind donations
- Souvenir / Awards Supplier
- Special Arrangements Aide (access, child care, sign language, special diets)
- Technical Equipment Aide
- Ticket Sellers
- Ushers/Hosts
- Volunteer and Donor Recognition Coordinator
- Volunteer Recruitment Coordinator
- Welcoming Committee

## **Ethics**

The ethical considerations of events deserve special consideration. Depending on the group, these can be complex. Don't be overwhelmed by the long list that follows. It is meant to identify the issues and offer some solutions.

- **Spending funds:** The money raised must actually be spent for the nonprofit group's purposes. The public is increasingly suspicious about nonprofits and how funds are spent.
- **Fundraising costs:** Keep fundraising costs to a minimum. Laws do exist in some jurisdictions that set maximum fundraising expenses as compared to money raised. Be aware of any such city, county, state, or federal laws.
- **Suppliers:** Exercise extra caution when dealing with suppliers who are not at an arm's-length arrangement. Beware of conflicts of interest. Avoid finders' fees, kickbacks, or incentives from suppliers.
- **Community standards:** Respect the community's standards. Avoid anything that smacks of sexism, racism, or ageism.

- **Alcohol:** Nonprofit organizations that serve alcohol at events must pay heed. This goes beyond ethics, too. Lawsuits have also demonstrated that the person pouring the drinks is responsible if a drunk driver is hurt or hurts someone else. When serving alcohol, current trends are to limit the beverages to beer and wine; to limit the number of drinks (e.g. include no more than two free drinks as part of the price of admission to an event); or to limit when drinks are served (e.g. only during the first hour or only with dinners). A cash bar is another option and it is sometimes provided for those who want to drink more or if spirits are offered.
- **Smoking:** The event should have a clear and widely known policy regarding smoking if the jurisdiction or facility being used does not have a policy.
- **Gambling:** Consider carefully before involving your nonprofit group in any gambling activities. This includes casinos, raffles, draws, bingos, lotteries, and similar games of chance. Double-check all local, state, and federal laws on the subject.
- **Accessibility:** Accessibility extends far beyond organizations dealing with people who have special needs. Inspect any premises you may use for an event to make sure it is wheelchair accessible, from ramps to special washrooms. Speakers and entertainers should be interpreted into sign language for people with hearing impairments. Offering childcare can make an event more accessible for parents. Offer to make arrangements on request for those who require special food because of health, religion or other reasons.
- **Language and faith:** Consider bilingual materials. Be sensitive to inter-faith issues too, for example, if and when saying grace and when choosing events dates.
- **Sponsorships:** Sometimes sponsorships can create problems. Be careful of the company you keep.
- **Elitism:** Charges of elitism are a thorn for those planning high-priced special events. Sometimes it helps to offer a sliding scale of admission fees, with discounts or scholarships. Ultimately, a group must decide: will the event be open to all, or will it cater to the wishes of those who can give the most?
- **Borrowing ideas:** Nonprofits must respect each other. Most organizations are friendly and open about sharing information with others. While there aren't many, if any, truly original fundraising events, it is dangerous to copy too closely. New techniques reported in the media quickly become trends as dozens of organizations pick them up. Using the same idea too often can render it totally unproductive for everyone.

All of these factors and more must be taken into account in choosing how to organize your special event. It can seem daunting to deal with them all, yet the public expects higher standards of morality from

nonprofit organizations than from anyone else. Be sure you live up to a reasonable standard of ethics.

## **A Few Words of Wisdom**

One way to look at fundraising galas is that your first one is not specifically to make money. It is to learn from your mistakes! You will, everyone does, and continues to do so year after year... the goal is to have the mistakes be less and less significant each year. So think of your second gala as being for the money. No matter how experienced you are in running special events, each different type is unique. It takes time and money to learn how to do it well. Be sure your organization can repeat the successes.

If you are only going to do it once, be sure it makes a lot of money that one time. Most ideas don't. They improve with age. They become part of the community's traditions. So be sure to follow these rules.

- Plan far in advance / plan plenty of time.
  - Keep good records.
  - Who gave how much?
  - What were the sources of free goods and services?
  - Who displayed volunteer talents (or problems)?
  - Who should you ask again?
  - How much time did it really take?
  - What were the hidden costs?
  - What were the problems to avoid?
  - Train new leaders and retrain old ones.
  - Select an understudy a year in advance.
  - Allow people to retire before they burn out.
  - Keep retirees as advisors.
  - Build on winner ideas.
  - Research new ideas carefully.
  - Don't constantly look for new ideas... improve the best of the past.
  - Don't guess how to succeed. Ask Alliance and others who have.
  - Share your information with Alliance and its members.
- Everyone wins.

## **The Event Ability Quiz**

How well does your special event plan stack up? Whether this is your first attempt or you are already a seasoned special events professional, try the simple self-scoring quiz in Appendix 2 by fundraising events guru Ken Wyman. While it is not a scientific system, it is a fun way to estimate how successful your event might be.

# 3: The Gala Program

**P**lanning for a gala's program needs to start on day one of the planning process. Everything revolves around it and it needs to be specific. The program helps everyone working on the gala know what the goals are and gives them an idea of what they need to do to help reach those goals.

## Setting the Gala's Program

To start setting your gala's program, first do your research. Review this document and related materials and also find out what has been tried, succeeded, and failed in your community. Then zero in on winning ideas that your gala development team and/or paid professional could "pull off." Use brainstorming and other techniques like SWOT matrixes (strengths, weaknesses, obstacles, and threats) to settle on the gala goals and program. Plan for every detail and every minute of the gala.

## A Few Winner Fundraising Ideas

Too many organizations waste creative energy trying to come up with new ideas that may or may not work. You get no extra marks in fundraising for originality, only for productivity. Some ideas do get worn out from over-use. That said, this does not happen as often as most people think. Better to succeed by repeating a proven method than fail inventing something new. Fundraising galas have been successful to varying degrees for bicycling and walking advocacy organizations. Don't outright steal other group's ideas though and try to put on a duplicate gala in the same community. That is not only unethical, but may be unproductive too. An event that works well in a community once a year might fizzle if tried twice a year. Both organizations could suffer. You may be able to borrow an idea from another city, with modifications. The Alliance member organizations solicited for gala advice and information were gracious in their help, but would be understandably upset if it were used to put on a similar gala in their community.

To spice up your gala, consider adapting a classic tried-and-true component like the ones listed on the following pages.

## **Give Someone an Award**

When someone receives an award, all their friends, relatives and admirers will buy tickets to attend the ceremony. Who you honor profoundly affects who attends and how many tickets are sold. When a business leader gets one, their co-workers, customers, suppliers and hopeful hangers-on buy tickets, too. Even their business competitors may attend. That's why some of the most successful events are dinners in honor of big business leaders. A great many people feel the "invisible command" to attend. They often also see awards dinners as a chance to network with colleagues and advance their careers. Advocacy organizations that tend to use confrontation may feel uncomfortable honoring community leaders. Exceptional circumstances may allow it, however. A leader may have shown some progress, no matter how marginal. Recognizing that publicly can be an effective incentive in a social change program.

## **More Tickets for Your Money Raffle**

Try selling three raffle tickets for \$5 (or whatever amount) instead of just one. Don't sell fewer than three as a minimum purchase. It feels like a bigger bargain, and if there's more than one prize, actually increases odds of winning. On the other hand, it is best to not offer discounts for multiple purchases (e.g. having a raffle at \$1 per ticket and also offering at five tickets for \$3). It makes accounting needlessly complex and may run afoul of some laws.

## **Put a Price on Everything**

Thinking creatively can reveal many more income sources at an event. Organizers routinely charge extra at a cash bar, but why stop there? If you have floral centerpieces at an event, someone will take them home. Why not sell them instead (and help those guests with guilt complexes)? This works especially well if the arrangements are dried flowers that will last for a long time. Get the flowers donated in the first place, of course! Ask florists, garden clubs, or a flower arranging class at a school. One group even got the flowers second hand from a funeral home—don't tell the guests!

## **Organize a "Dessert Dash"**

Have attendees bring and display their own favorite desserts at the head table. Each table has a silent auction bid form where table companions are asked to collectively total their bid. The highest bidding table gets the first choice among the selection of goodies to bring back to their table. Then, the next highest bidding table selects

their favorite and so on until all of the tables have accounted for their bids. Tables of eight to ten people can generate averages of \$10 to \$20 per person bringing in extra revenue for the event while also creating a fun atmosphere for your guests. This saves you from paying for a dessert expense on the food bill and further improving your bottom line net profit.

## Cash In on the Photo Opportunity

If you have a special guest of honor, have someone with a camera take pictures of people with the guest. Sell the pictures. A simple cardboard frame, sold at most photo supply shops, can be personalized as a souvenir item. Add a printed design, a sticker, label or business card. A Polaroid camera is best. The immediacy is exciting. Each photo can be autographed. On the other hand, with digital or negatives, some people may order several copies of the picture. Make sure the guest of honor agrees in advance. Time restrictions will limit the number of photos. Make that a selling feature. Advertise “limited quantities only!” Some organizations charge anywhere from \$5 to \$50 for a photo. If the guest of honor has a sense of humor, they may charge even more not to have your photo taken with him/her.

## The Encore Auction

At a gala with musicians, the performers can auction off a choice of encores. The audience can vote with the money they contribute. At benefit concerts this has been known to raise thousands of extra event dollars when auctioning multiple encores for several hundred dollars each.

## Not Every Idea Works

There are some fund-raising events that are probably wisest to avoid. While some ideas might be fundamentally sound, they fail because of improper planning and execution. Other ideas are hard to do well under any circumstances. However, no idea is universally bad. Some organizations have had successes with all of the following. If you decide to try any of these, proceed with caution!

***A Roast:*** These may provide an opportunity to poke fun at someone’s foibles, while raising money through their circle of influence. Be careful of the fine line between clever digs and embarrassment. Surprise party roasts are seldom a good idea.

***Bachelor or “Slave” Auctions:*** There is no need to say more.

**Big Ticket Raffles** (think houses, yachts, around the world in 90 days vacations): These are fraught with legal and timing implications especially if funds incoming are less than anticipated or below the value of the item.

**Time Sensitive Items:** Anything with a date on it, unless it is pre-sold before you order it, can put your organization in a financial bind... and cause extra work in how to get rid of the leftovers. This holds especially true for perishable items.

## Emcee and Speakers

All but one of the example galas (pages 12-17) uses an emcee. They ranged from a volunteer, to an organization's executive director, to an elected official, to a national television news anchor. Choose your emcee wisely for obvious reasons.

Whether or not you have speakers and/or presentations depends on your program and event goals. Half of the example galas have them to educate guests on advocacy, or tug at heartstrings. One of the example galas had six people giving five-minute speeches and another had two people giving lengthier slide show presentations.

## Awards

Awards of one sort or another can be a big part of a fundraising gala. They can serve to recognize the works of those associated with the organization and/or those outside the organization. They can be annual or one-time awards. They can be used to draw guests if the award is for a well-known person or group or if that person or group has large base of supporters.

Awards can also be a distraction to the event's fundraising efforts and the flow of the event. They can expend much time and energy—developing and following through on a nomination process; crafting and creating the award itself; securing and prepping a presenter; and arranging all the presentation logistics.

## How to Get Musicians/Celebrities

Having celebrities or first-rate musicians at an event can attract a lot of people. It is possible to get them to appear and perform free. The celebrity might be:

- a movie star or media personality,
- a politician or an ambassador,
- a famous athlete or coach, or
- an artist or author.

It is usually easier to get a celebrity than a musician. Musicians make their living from public performances, and must work hard when they play. The celebrities may view it as an opportunity to support a cause they believe in and promote their careers with a minimum of labor.

If you and your helpers find musicians willing to donate their time, choose only one band. Bands, especially on donated time, expect to hold the stage.

Don't try to solicit a free performance by touting how much free publicity the performer will get. Unless it is unusually large event, the benefit to the performer will be negligible. They could probably get more publicity in other ways.

The easiest way to get a celebrity guest is to look for someone who will be in the area anyway. If the celebrity is nearby filming a movie, playing in a tournament, visiting family or friends or performing, it may not be much more effort to participate in your event.

Be reasonable in your expectations. It might be wonderful to have the celebrity perform for you. However that might require costumes, a complicated set, lighting, sound equipment, back-up musicians, and other paraphernalia. Having someone famous appear at a simple reception in their honor might be better. It puts fewer demands on the celebrity and on you. Your guests may also prefer having an opportunity to chat with the celebrity face to face, instead of just being part of the audience. It's more intimate, more exciting, and more fun to brag about.

Turning your gala into a reception before or after a performance or sporting event can be an option. Instead of trying to arrange your special event, with all the complications involved, piggyback on something already coming to town. The established, commercial promoter is better equipped to arrange the show. You can then invite the star to the reception and work deals to sell tickets to both the public event and to the private reception. Because the expenses are lower, the net proceeds may be higher than if you put on the show yourself.

Try to find a celebrity who has a connection to your area or cause. Check your own member and past event lists. Read the entertainment pages of the newspaper and show biz magazines. You never know who you may find!

When trying to contact a performer, avoid going through the agent if at all possible. The agent's job is to protect the performer from people who want freebies. After all, the agent is usually paid a percentage of the jobs he or she arranges for the star. Instead try and contact the performer directly. The best people to help you with this are the entertainment reporters from the local media. They can contact performers for an interview and raise the subject at that time.

Many performers are members of unions, as musicians, actors or writers. Ask them for clearance for the performance. In some cases, restrictions may mean paying union scale rates - which are not high. For more information, see the "How One Musician Sees It" section of Ken Wyman's *Guide to Special Events Fundraising*.

## Auctions

Auctions provide an easy way for people to give as much as they want. Auctions work well because:

- people give to their own limits,
- people get something in return, and
- people have fun memories.

Professional auctioneer Joe Small expands this list. He's raised over \$20 million in 1,300 charity auctions since 1975, in the US and Canada. Here's his list of "advantages of an auction" adapted from Fundraising Management magazine, March 1988.

### Advantages of an Auction

From Joe Small, Auction Expert

1. New money from new sources, in substantial amounts.
2. Excellent newspaper and television exposure.
3. A fun-filled, enjoyable evening for all.
4. Image enhancement for the sponsoring group.
5. New donors.
6. New volunteers.
7. Build up of enthusiasm toward an annual auction.
8. An efficient method of channeling the energies of those many persons who wish to help you but don't know how.
9. All money paid up front, not in delayed payment pledges that often shrink or prove difficult to collect.
10. Substantial increase of annual income and broadening of donor base.

## What Should You Auction Off?

The best items have emotional and psychological value, not market value so there is no obvious pre-set upper limit.

On items that have a market value, like a video recorder, bidding usually stops just below the normal retail value. With items that fulfill fantasies, a market price is not clearly established, so bids run much higher. Depending on how bicycle-centric your event and guests are, all things bicycle and bicycling are fair game. Here are some auction item ideas to get you started:

- Autographed sports items can round out your collection for an auction.
- Media stars and politicians can donate ties or other memorabilia.
- Musicians could provide the customized jackets worn on their tours, albums, and free sets of tickets.

- Radio stations can allow the top bidder to co-host a show and sit in for the day behind the scenes.
- Sports reporters can take people to watch a game from the press box and meet the players in the dressing room.
- Driving the bulldozer or swinging the wrecking ball to demolish a building are two other popular auction items.
- A local amateur cook can prepare a fine dinner.
- Teenagers can mow lawns all summer.

The list is limited only by your imagination. Even without major contacts, anyone can find valuable services to auction off. Celebrity, fantasy, and service items do not provide something for everyone. A good mix is essential. The choice should be so wide that everyone will get excited about something, even if they didn't plan to buy in the first place.

Enhance the value of commercially available items by arranging novel combinations. For example, a video player may include a movie every week for a year from a local rental store. Or offer a custom home movie or rock video by a professional producer. An airline trip can include hotel accommodation in a hotel and spending money donated by a travelers' check company.

## Where Do You Get Items to Auction?

Auction items should almost always be donated. The exception is when it takes more time and cost than it would to buy the item. Many businesses are delighted to donate items if they believe they will receive exposure to potential customers. Beware of unacceptable, low-cost, or used items though. Before you start procurement, have a plan for saying "thanks, but no thanks".

Joe Small notes that "goods and services are vastly easier to obtain than money." Nonprofits sometime find it easier to get something that they can convert to cash at an auction than a direct financial contribution.

### What to Auction Off

From Joe Small, Auction Expert

Here are some other items recommended by auctioneer Joe Small:

"All items should, with rare exceptions, be either brand-new or genuine antiques. Examples of popular items include air fare to anywhere, a garden tractor, use of a billboard for a month, matched luggage, season tickets, landscaping service, a gourmet dinner for 12, brass or bronze items, paintings, cameras, home entertainment centers, new or antique furniture, stained glass windows, condos in vacation destinations, a fishing boat, a diamond ring, an expensive watch."

## What Are the Different Types of Auctions?

There are two major categories of auctions: silent and live. Another growing third, that is not within the realm of this guide, is the internet auction.

### Live Auction

The live auction is perfect for a small number of items that are:

- more expensive (say \$350 and up),
- easy to understand, and
- popular with almost everyone.

A live auctioneer gets everyone's attention, and can increase the bids. On the other hand, it is hard to listen to a live auction for a long time. It also leaves out some people who can only bid on low-cost items.

The live auctioneer sometimes varies the pace. Some of an auctioneer's techniques may include the following.

1. **Lightning Rounds:** Very short time allowed. Builds energy.
2. **First Come/First Served:** Give items for absurdly low prices to the first person brave enough to bid. Gets the bidding going.
3. **Tombola:** The auction winner gets to choose from mystery boxes only knowing the potential, not exact contents. It works best if some contain fabulously expensive items and others funny consolation prizes.

A variant of tombola is auctioning (or raffling at say \$5-\$10 tickets) chances to reach into a drum and pull out a slip of paper. Some winners or rafflers get slips saying "Sorry! Thank you for donating to XYZ Organization." Others get slips saying that they've won such-and-such prizes – these are often items that are too inexpensive to auction live.

4. **Mini Live:** Example Gala F's live auction is a unique operation. It is basically simultaneous, mini-live auctions at each of the event's 120 tables that lasts about five minutes at the end of the program. The 120 table captains are responsible for getting the guests to the event and then for doing the auctioning.

### Silent Auction

The silent auction is for a large number of items that are:

- less expensive (say \$50 to \$250 retail),
- require thought, and
- of special interest, such as painting your home, having a lawyer prepare your will, or free orthodontic work.

Silent auctions provide less distraction from the other fun, such as dinner and chatting with friends. As a result they help round out the evening. On the other hand, they are easier to ignore, rarely bring high profits, and take longer.

To conduct a silent auction, display the item to be auctioned off in a high traffic area. Attach a sheet of paper for the bids, or mount a cardboard bid register nearby. Be sure to fully describe any restrictions on each auctioned item such as “blackout days”, “limited hours”, and “expiration dates.” Bidders write in the amount they will pay and print their name, or special assigned code number. Each higher bidder supersedes the previous bid. People may bid as often as they wish.

Surprise time limits on some of the items will keep the pace brisk. These are usually secret, so no one knows when bidding will close on the item they want.

## **How Many Items Can You Auction?**

A live auction should last no more than an hour and a half. In that time you can auction from 30 to 45 items. Allow about 90 seconds per item, with some time in between. A silent auction can include up to 250 to 350 items.

## **How Many People?**

Auctions come in all sizes, depending on the ability of the nonprofit group to draw a crowd. Joe Small reports that they normally range from 200 to 650 people. However, he has seen them run effectively as small as 75 people and as large as 1,650.

## **What Else Should Happen at an Auction?**

Too many distractions can reduce the income at an auction. Don’t combine it with a casino, a major speech, or a star-studded concert. Keep people focused on the auction.

Joe Small recommends the ideal combination to be an auction and fundraising dinner. There should only be one speech, he suggests. It should be about seven minutes long, by a well-known and beloved figure. The speech says little more than “Thank you for coming. Here’s an exciting project that the money raised will fund. Let’s get started.”

## Sample Silent Auction Check In Instructions

### CHECK IN INSTRUCTIONS

1. Board member or volunteer will welcome folks as they come in the door and direct them to the check in table.
2. Check in table volunteers asks if the guest has pre-registered or paid for their ticket already.
3. If Yes: Pre-registered Guests:
  - a. Look up name in the registration list (alpha order), check off name, make note of their bid number. Tell the guest their bid number.
  - b. Give guest their nametag, in order of bid number.
  - c. Please direct ALL CELEBRITIES (they have red name tags) to Jane Doe.
4. If No: Walk-in guests:
  - a. Have them fill out half page registration form.
  - b. Add their name to the registration list in numerical order by bid number.
  - c. Write their bid number on the form.
  - d. Ask the guest if they are a \_\_\_\_\_ member?
  - e. If they say yes, believe them.
  - f. If they say no, tell them that members get a \$\_\_ discount on the ticket and that they can sign up if they like.
  - g. Collect \$\_\_ for each member ticket and \$\_\_ for each nonmember ticket.
  - h. Cash goes into and change comes out of the cash box.
  - i. Checks need to be payable to \_\_\_\_\_ and should be stapled to the registration form.
  - j. If using a credit card, it must be VISA or Mastercard. Run the card through the machine, wait for it to print, and have them sign the white copy. Staple the yellow copy to the registration form.
5. To all guests: If they want to drink free alcohol and look young, ask for ID and stamp hand with star.
6. Give guest a bid instructions card, show them where the auction end times are indicated and encourage them to write their bid number on the card.
7. Thank them for coming, point out the silent auction tables, and note-bidding schedule. Encourage them to bid soon and to have a great evening.

# Sample Silent Auction Instructions

## AUCTION INSTRUCTIONS

Auction	Sponsor/Name of Auction	End time
A		8:00 pm
B		8:45 pm

- Auction Info:** There are two silent auctions. Both start at 7:00 pm, when the event starts. Each ends at a different time as indicated above.
- Guests must fill out bid sheet with their full name and bid number which is printed on their nametag.
- Bid sheets and items CANNOT leave the auction tables during the auctions.
- When MC calls the end of an auction, volunteers should immediately start collecting bid sheets, even if people are still bidding. Allow the person bidding at that moment to finish and then collect the sheets and move on down the table.
- Auction Item Info:** Each auction item has a lot number which indicates which auction it is in and gives it a number.
  - For example: An item might be A-04. This means it is for Auction A or the \_\_\_\_\_ Auction. This number will be printed on the bid sheet and also written either on the item, on a sticker on the item, and also possibly on information that goes with the item.
- Some lots have more than one item. It may be a package of items from one donor, meant to stay together OR it may be more than one item that we thought would make a good package. Regardless, each bid sheet will have a lot number and will list the item names that go in with that lot number.
- Lots that include gift certificates or very small items have a card to take the place of the certificate/item. This way someone can't easily walk off with the item. The card will have the lot number and item name printed and should be next to the bid sheet.
- Auction bids start at half the value. There are over 130 auction items to move in three hours. We need guests to bid soon, bid often and bid high, and even then, they are going to get great deals.
- Auction Volunteers:** Have three tasks and three titles:
  - Auction Supervisors:** Make sure all items do not leave the table until the auction is over and then a volunteer needs to take them to the shelving located near the check in/out table for pick up later.
  - Auction Ticklers:** Encourage bidders to bid high and bid often and spur competition between bidders.
  - Auction Barker:** Let folks near the table know amount that items are going for in order to encourage folks to step up and grab great deals.
- Supervisors** should stay at each table until it ends. This role will be changed out as volunteers float from one station to another.
- Ticklers and Barkers** should be at the table that ends the soonest. So they should start out near Auction A/\_\_\_\_\_. Tables, then move to Auction B/\_\_\_\_\_. Tables. They can work together and switch out whenever they need a change or a break.

## Sample Silent Auction Check Out Instructions

### CHECK OUT INSTRUCTIONS

1. Auction info: As each silent auction ends (8:00 and 8:45pm), auction volunteer will highlight winner with yellow highlighter. The winner is the highest bidder over the minimum bid. Then collect all the bid sheets.
2. Bid sheets will then be filed into folders by winning bid number. There will be 200 folders numbered 1-200. The winning bidder number on the bid sheet indicates which folder that bid sheet needs to go into.
3. This filing needs to be done promptly after each table closes!
4. If a guest comes up to the table to find out if they have won anything, ask for their bid number and then look in the folder with that number. If at any time in the evening, all the bid sheets have been filed and there is nothing in the folder, then they have not won anything and should continue bidding.
5. **Check out:** When a guest wants to check out, a volunteer should ask what their bid number is. They should also ask if they are paying for just that bid number or any other bid number. For example if their spouse bid and won anything, they might be paying for two people's items and therefore two bid numbers.
6. The volunteer should go to the folders and pull the folder with the guest's bid number. Or whichever bid numbers the guest wants to pay for.
7. The volunteer will get out the folder and use the bid sheets to make out a receipt for the guest.
8. **Receipt book instructions:** Write the name of the guest, their phone number and their bid number in the top of the receipt book. Then on each line write the lot number of the item won, the item title, the value of the item, and the winning bid. At the bottom, tally the winning bids for all the items and circle the total. See sample at the front of each book. Please keep sample IN the book.
9. Give the top copy (white copy) of the receipt to the guest and the yellow copy to a volunteer called a runner.
10. The runner takes the yellow receipt to the shelves where the items are located. The runner locates all the lots which have been purchased by the guest. This table is monitored by the item clerk.
11. The runner then takes the items and the yellow receipt to a separate table where the guest can get them after they have paid.
12. **Cashier:** Meanwhile, the guest takes their white receipt to the cashier. They can pay by cash, check or charge. Cashier will take the white receipt.
13. **Cash** goes into and change comes out of the cash box. Write cash on the white receipt.
14. **Checks** need to be payable to \_\_\_\_\_ and should be stapled to the white receipt.
15. If using a **credit card**, it must be VISA or Mastercard. Run the card through the machine, wait for it to print, have them sign the cc slip, and give them the white copy of the cc slip. Staple the yellow copy of the cc slip to the white receipt.
16. Guest give item clerk white copy of receipt.
17. Item clerk gives guest yellow copy of receipt and items.
18. Clerk files white receipt and the payment record (check or cc slip) in box.

As the auction begins, a one-minute mock auction can educate the crowd on how to bid. During the auction, the auctioneer may vary the pace with a joke or a story. Don't allow the auctioneer to tell tales that are off-color, or not funny. The auction itself is the entertainment and it had better be good.

## **Who Should Be the Auctioneer?**

A good auctioneer is essential. Someone who knows what they are doing can achieve prices higher or read the crowd for signs of fatigue. They can also better pace the expensive items with the low-cost fun ones.

Involve the auctioneer as early as possible. He or she may have valuable advice on how to organize the event for maximum results.

A professional auctioneer may be willing to volunteer time. Joe Small cautions that some otherwise competent professionals don't have experience in the fundraising setting. They may not be patient with people who have never been to an auction before and don't understand the system. Or they may show off their high-speed auctioneer's patter, which is too hard for a non-auction going crowd to understand. As a result people may not bid, for fear of embarrassment.

Local celebrities are sometimes good, if they make a living by talking, such as a radio or TV announcer or a politician. If you go this route, it's a good idea to have two celebrities. They can pace each other through the hour. And, if one cancels at the last minute, another is already in place.

Expect to pay \$500-\$1,500 for just the services of a professional auctioneer. A full-service package, including an auctioneer, a clerk, and experienced ring men to spot the bids can cost thousands. You may also get an orientation meeting, to help set up the auction system and consultations throughout the procurement and preparation processes. All the special forms necessary, bidding paddles, and other equipment should be included.

A good auctioneer can increase the income substantially, compared to a do-it-yourself arrangement. Joe Small estimates the difference runs from 30% extra income to double the money. One of the example galas (pages 12-17) saw a substantial difference in their bottom line profit by hiring a professional auctioneer after working with a free or reduced rate auctioneer. After hiring a professional auctioneer for the first time in 2004, another example gala witnessed an increase in their gross income by \$20,000 from the previous year while their net income almost doubled from 2003 to 2004.

## **What Are the Problems with Auctions?**

For all their advantages, auctions can cause problems. Here are a few to be wary of.

1. **Art auctions:** Avoid art-only auctions in most cases. Unless the art is very good, bids may be low. Low prices can embarrass everyone involved. Don't hesitate to auction off a few works by respected artists or those with bicycles or bicycling related themes, however.
2. **Restrictions on use of items:** Some auction items carry restrictive conditions. Be sure buyers are aware of this before they make the purchase. For example, airlines and hotels may restrict use to low seasons. People providing services may be willing to comply only when they aren't busy. Someone may have to pick up a heavy item at the factory, or pay extra for delivery.

At the same time, it is to your advantage to try to ensure that buyers take advantage of services they purchase. An individual who offers to prepare a gourmet dinner may be upset if the buyer never collects. If the item or service is not used within a reasonable time, the donor may not be willing to donate again.

4. **Failure to plan:** Auctions require a great deal of advance preparation. Joe Small estimates that the auction is 80% over before the first bid is placed. Allow enough time. Set up committees with care. Enlist volunteers early. Get advice from professionals at the beginning, and follow it.

## Coordinating Volunteer Committees

### From Joe Small, Auction Expert

Committee heads - the top 12 - should be chosen for their leadership qualities, not because they volunteer. Pair these with 70 to 75 enthusiastic volunteers who will form the committees that will make the event a success, even though the bulk of the work will be done by 25 to 30 people. In addition to a chairperson, committees are needed to:

- obtain merchandise for the auction,
- run the auction,
- promote the auction,
- as a reminder, put silent auction ending times on display,
- be sure the people who bought the items actually pay for and leave with them,
- distribute an advance list of items to be sold,
- sell tickets to the gala,
- register bidders and pass out information,
- collect the funds at the end of the evening,
- thank those who donated items and those who placed large bids,
- plan door prizes, and
- establish a theme, handle the decorations, and more.

## **Multiple Auction Types in One Event**

Three of the example galas (pages 12-17) stage both a silent and live auction. The remaining three example galas either only do a silent auction or live auction. While staging multiple auctions and types of auctions in one event certainly increases the difficulty of the event, it also allows the organization to procure and raise funds on a greater range of items. It also gives guests a choice in price range and personal preferences. Of the Alliance example galas, the two with the best bottom line ratio and the three with the highest net each had multiple auction types.

## **Procurement**

The act of procuring auction, raffle, and other items is one of the bigger year-to-year challenges for the organizations responsible for the example galas. In some cases the responsibility falls on the organization's board members or staff. In other cases, a person is paid to lead procurement. Regardless of who/whom does it, there must be a plan of how past and potential future donors will be identified, contacted (a sample letter is provided on page 43), and convinced. Procurement typically starts six months before the event. One of the example galas has success with its orchestrated campaign to contact those in bicycle industry and then meet with them at the annual Interbike trade show to either "seal a deal" or secure items that the trade show reps don't want to pack up and ship back.

## **Auction Catalogue**

A catalogue describing and showing the items to be auctioned is a staple of high dollar auctions. These are typically available before an auction as a service to guests as well as an enticement to bidding. All three of the example galas with live auctions have a catalogue. One of the two example galas with only silent auctions has a catalogue. Of the four with catalogues, two place them on-line prior to their galas and one places it on-line afterward to help acknowledge the donors and help sell any leftover items. But, the Alliance recommends doing everything you can to avoid having leftover items.

## **Storage and Logistics Before, During, and After the Event**

Plans are needed for cataloging and storing auction items as they come; moving the items to and storing them at the auction site; and

for removing any unsold items and storing them after the event. This is much easier for service related items and other items that can be represented by a coupon, certificate, photo, and so on. Actual items may take up significant space. If the organization must account for storage and logistics capabilities, this could include additional costs.

## What to Do with Unsold Items

Expect to have leftovers—auction items that do not sell or those items that don't reach their minimum bid. The example galas use a variety of strategies singularly and in combination to move the unsold items. The first and most common is to use the items as perks/rewards/thanks for the gala event's volunteers and later for the volunteers of other organizational activities. Next, the example gala organizers sell the items. This is done via on-line auction sites (such as E-bay) or advertising the items via the organization's website and/or newsletter. Purchasers are expected to drop by organizer's headquarters during office hours to pay for and/or retrieve the items. Three other methods are:

1. returning the items, especially if they are high value, to the donor,
2. offering them as bike ride/race event awards, and
3. using them as raffle items at other events.

### Sample Post-Auction Sale Announcement

#### SALE SALE SALE!

The party's over, but the great deals have just begun! Stop by [REDACTED] [REDACTED] 9am-5pm weekdays (or call to arrange another time - [REDACTED]) to check out some of the items that didn't sell. Best offers being taken now; all proceeds benefit the [REDACTED]. Contact [REDACTED] for more info.

Co-motion Americano 58 cm frameset - light green metallic (\$1500 value)

Shimano gift certificate for SH-R215 shoes & PD-7750 pedals (\$420 value)

Mission Yoga (Bikram Studio) - 3 month unlimited pass (\$300 value)

Thule VeloVise 589 Auto roof rack (\$100 value)

## Printed Souvenir Programs

Do not disregard the value of a printed program. It serves multiple purposes (like letting everyone know what to expect and when; helping keep volunteers and staff on track; highlighting gala sponsors and

donors; and providing another opportunity to promote the organization and/or event goals). Many gala guests value them as keepsakes.

## Nine Ways a Printed Program Can Increase Your Effectiveness

A program can be as simple as a piece of paper with information printed on both sides and folded into a four-page booklet. It can be elaborate, multi-paged and colorful. No matter how modest or fancy, here's what to do.

1. **Thank sponsors, donors and volunteers publicly in the program.** The size of a sponsorship often relates directly to the amount of publicity it generates. Business sponsors expect advertising in the program and at the event.
2. **Include educational material about your work in the program.** Everyone attending should learn more about your organization. This is especially important at events where guests are not members and may not know your work very well.
3. **Tuck a donation request inside the cover and include your organization's mailing address.** Some people may want to send in extra contributions. Consider providing reply envelopes if you expect people to send gifts after the event. Only a few will respond, but the more donation channels you offer the better.
4. **Get the printing donated.** This helps keep costs low. Be sure to include a thank-you to the person or group donating the printing in the program itself. This can encourage more donations of printing. It also reassures your other supporters. Donors like to know that their gifts go to the organizational mission, and are not spent on printing. Not only must you be a wise steward of their money, you must appear to be so.
5. **Insert a simple recruitment note and form for new volunteers inside the program.** Ask people who might like to volunteer to fill in their name and contact information. You might also ask what kind of volunteer work they'd like to do, or what their skills are. If your event is enticing, more people may want to get involved with you.

### Hot Tip!

#### Reusing Artwork

When a printer arranges typesetting, artwork, and layout of printed material for you, be sure to pick up the "working material" afterwards. With minor changes, it may save money in producing next year's program, or on other printing jobs.

**Hot Tip!**

**Follow Protocol**

When inviting government leaders, elected officials, and other people with positions of honor, there's a specific order to list them in printed material. This affects the order in which they walk in a procession to the head table, too (if you do that). Always ask the guest's office staff for the correct order of precedence or check with your local library.

- 6.. **Offer to contact people who want more information.** You never know what a coupon marked "please contact me" might lead to... perhaps a large corporate gift.
7. **Offer and evaluation form.** When asked face-to-face, people often say they enjoyed an event more than they did, rather than seem rude. An anonymous questionnaire gets more honest answers, and more detail. You could ask how the event could be improved next time. Ask for rating of various factors, such as the room, refreshments, speeches, and entertainment. Don't rank them on a scale of one to ten, because people are often unsure whether 1 is the highest of lowest. Instead, ask people to circle one of Very Good, Good, Fair, Poor, Very Poor. Leave plenty of room for comments, too.
8. **Sell the program,** especially if it is high quality. Fans at rock concerts, sporting events and art shows often pay top dollar for souvenir programs. Prices of \$5 to \$25 are not uncommon. This is only appropriate if the program is optional and interesting enough to be good value for the price.
9. **Sell advertisements in the program.** Do this only if it's an efficient use of volunteer and staff effort. Ad sales people from a local newspaper or radio station can help establish value. Use this valuation as part of your sponsorship package. Be careful not to waste too much energy if the returns are low.

# 4: Budgeting, Sponsorships, and Donations

## Return on Investment

Return On Investment (ROI) is a fundamental business concept. It is also something that every gala fundraiser needs to take into consideration. A business investment consists of working capital, physical assets, inventory costs, and people's time. And business ROI is the net gain that results from a business undertaking investment in an effort to produce tangible profits.

## Watch Your Fundraising ROI

The "investment" in a fundraiser consists of any up-front expenditure; the costs associated with the assets that are utilized; and the value of people's time spent toward and on the fundraising. The fundraiser's ROI is the net financial gain.

The ROI shown in Galas At A Glance (page 9) is the amount of money raised over the amount of expenses (gross income/expenses). The higher the number over 1, the better the gala performed. Let's put this number into perspective. In a direct mail campaign, if you raise \$1 for every \$1 spent, you would break-even and have an ROI of 1. That's considered an excellent return for direct mail because the primary goal is promotion. It would not be, however, considered a good return for a fundraising gala. The minimum goal should be to raise \$2 for every \$1 spent... to have an ROI of 2 or better.

The ROI's among the Alliance example galas range from 3.6 to 2.0. Example Gala A's gross income of \$72,000 and expenses of \$20,000 means that they earned \$3.60 for every \$1 spent (ROI of 3.6). In comparison, Example Gala E had a gross income of \$32,900 and costs of \$16,300, thus earning \$2 for every \$1 spent (ROI of 2.0). The non-Alliance Example Gala F had a ROI of 4.0—\$400,000 gross income and \$100,000 costs or a return of \$4 for every \$1 spent.

## Ways to Improve Your ROI

To improve your ROI, focus your efforts where you will get positive responses and avoid wasting your time on unproductive endeavors. Each person who helps out in a gala is offering their time in exchange for something that benefits everyone. Give them specific assignments that focus on maximum results. Don't waste people's time or you will discourage future participation.

## Why Is Your ROI Important?

Your ROI is a good indicator of the health of the fundraising gala. If the number is too low, your organization may end up constantly recruiting replacements for those who are not interested anymore. Your donors and volunteers will be hesitant to return because their time is not valued—they may see their money being wasted and see penny-pinching where open purse strings could have been a better solution. Design your fundraising gala to maximize your ROI and you will position your organization for success for many years to come.

## Getting Things for Free

In many special events, the nonprofit would have barely broken even on the ticket sales had it not been for the income resulting from savings from free goods and services. The best way to increase income is to lower costs with in-kind donations.

Experience shows that almost anything you might pay for can also be gotten for free. Often the contributed item is higher quality than you could afford to pay for. Here are some examples and considerations:

Examples	Considerations
Wines	The event facility site may charge a "corkage fee" for opening donated bottles. That may make it cheaper to buy from them.
Foods	Look for caterers and restaurants that are "about to open" or are new and looking for exposure through donated services. Know the event facility's own rules, e.g. if it requires in-house foodservice or is contracted to a caterer.
Printing	Printers are reluctant to give away their livelihood. Instead, look for businesses with their own printing operations; major corporations and newspapers, for example. Always allow extra time, so the printer can squeeze a free job in between paying clients.

## Sample Auction Items Solicitation Letter

\_\_\_\_\_, 200\_

Name  
Business  
Address  
City, State, Code

RE: {Name of your fundraising gala}

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

The {name of organization} is gearing up for its 20th annual auction. This year's function will be held on \_\_\_\_\_ at the \_\_\_\_\_ in \_\_\_\_\_. We thank you for your past support and ask you once again to contribute to our most important fundraising event of the year.

With your donation and the generosity of the guests, last year's auction netted more than \$\_\_\_\_,000. It is support from individuals and companies like yours that enables the {name of organization} to bring a Safe Routes to School program to \_\_\_\_\_, advocate for safe places to ride — both on and off the road — and to educate the public on the benefits of bicycling and walking. Your contribution and support also helps ensure that the {name of organization} retains its stature as an effective statewide voice for bicyclists.

Again this year, the auction catalog will feature all donated items. Donations will be listed on the {name of organization} web sites, as well as showcased at the event itself to be viewed by the \_\_\_\_+ guests.

Take advantage of the early donation program, which entitles you to a logo and link from our web sites to yours. To see your logo next to your donated item(s) and description(s), donations and logos must be received by \_\_\_\_\_.

Enclosed is an auction donation form and postage paid return envelope for your convenience. Procurement deadline is \_\_\_\_ day, \_\_\_\_\_, 200\_. Please provide as much detail as possible so we can present your donation accordingly in our catalog. You might also consider increasing the value of your donation so we can make this year's auction the most successful one ever.

Popular auction items in the past include:

- Crafts, Gift Baskets, and Handmade Items
- Gourmet Dinners and Catered Meals
- Guided Bike Tours and Sailboat Cruises
- Housesitting and Other Personal Services
- Outdoor Recreation Gear
- Restaurant and Retail Gift Certificates
- Skiing, Snowshoeing, Other Winter Pursuits
- Tickets to Sports, Arts/Cultural Events
- Vacation Getaways

Consider joining us for this fun evening affair. Tickets are \$\_\_\_\_ per person or you can sponsor a table of eight for \$\_\_\_\_. We would love to see you there!

Thank you for continuing to support bicycling and walking in \_\_\_\_\_. With your help, we know this year's auction will be even better than ever. If you have any questions, please call me at \_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_.

Sincerely,

Procurement Coordinator

\* \_\_\_\_\_ is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Your donation is deductible to the full extent of the law.

## Sample Sponsorship Spreadsheet

	Sponsor 1	Sponsor 2	Sponsor 3
<b>DONOR BUSINESS</b>	City Transportation Bikes	Brown Bean Coffee Houses	Rolling Stone Bicycle Shop
<b>CONTACT</b>	Jim Stapleton	Malissa Sweet	Alonzo Patroni
<b>POSITION</b>	owner	manager	owner
<b>ADDRESS</b>	P.O. Box 2178	4 Court Road	455 Evans Parkway
<b>CITY</b>	Carlton	Lithia	Martines
<b>STATE</b>	CA	CA	CA
<b>ZIP</b>	94033	94634	46589
<b>PHONE</b>	394-5901	586-1338	334-1272
<b>PHONE 2</b>	394-5667 cell	587-9016 pager	n/a
<b>FAX</b>	394-4378	n/a	334-1272
<b>E-mail</b>	jim@citybikes.com	coffeeinfo@bbb.com	ap@rolling.com
<b>SPONSOR LEVEL</b>	Yellow Jersey (\$6,000)	White Jersey (\$300)	
<b>DONATED ITEM(S)?</b>	City Slicker Bike - custom sized	n/a	
<b>QUANTITY</b>	1	0	
<b>VALUE EACH</b>	779	0	
<b>VALUE TOTAL</b>	779	0	
<b>DISPERSEMENT</b>	LIVE AUCTION	n/a	

Businesses will often donate goods for auctions. Retailers and manufacturers will give end-of-line, shop-worn, and second-quality merchandise. Some will contribute brand new, high-grade products and services as well.

Keep a sense of perspective. Don't waste precious staff or volunteer time working all day to get \$25 worth of goods donated. And make sure to give all donors a receipt for goods received (see section on Deductibility, page 50).

## How to Get and Reward Sponsors

Some expenses must be paid prior to the event. Sponsorships frequently make the difference between success and failure.

Large or small organizations may find a partner who can make it easier to produce a successful event. If this is your first time, you don't need to do it alone. Typical sponsorships are monetary in exchange for exposure in your gala promotions and at the event. Sponsors can also:

- pay some or all of the bills,
- add experience and expertise,

- provide labor power,
- strengthen your credibility,
- offer publicity, and
- donate goods and services for the event.

A sponsor may be a business with a bicycling and walking related product. Also, if you feel your organization doesn't have the capacity to hold its own gala, consider working with another nonprofit that will split the expenses and revenue with you.

Radio stations can be valuable sponsors. They gain in public goodwill, and you gain from promotional services. Corporate sponsors who want publicity are attracted when radio station sponsors promise free airtime. Many radio stations are willing to do this as part of their community relations programs. Television stations and newspapers are much less involved in this sort of arrangement. The station may offer a specified number of minutes of public service announcements (PSAs). They may also arrange to have announcers mention the event during their broadcasts. Personalities may appear at the event as well. Note that enrolling one station as a sponsor usually reduces publicity on other stations. Make sure you chose the best sponsor. Pick a station that reaches the people you will want to reach.

Service clubs also make good sponsors. They can provide an army of talented volunteers ready to take on good work. Many have experience in fundraising, and can help a new organization learn the ropes. Many service clubs are populated by business people who have the skills and contacts to sell tickets. Some service clubs want part of the proceeds from events they sponsor, for their own charitable projects. Make sure all the details are clear beforehand.

Some companies will donate samples of their products or services for your event. One or two large items are good as door prizes, or for an auction. They may offer enough smaller items, for each guest, as a party favor.

## **Multi-Level Sponsorships**

Multiple levels of sponsorships are worth considering. They provide opportunities to involve several sponsors. Each may give a different amount.

Call the largest sponsor a benefactor, for example. Their logo would appear on a large banner in a prominent place. They might also receive three seats at the head table, passes for ten people, and a full-page ad in the program.

Sustainers might be the next level. They may give two-thirds of the amount that benefactors do. They would get smaller recognition, get two seats at the head table, passes for eight, and a two-thirds-page ad in the program. (See pages 46-47 for sample sponsorship materials.)

## Sample Sponsorship Letter

June \_\_, 200\_\_

Re: Great Advertising Through \_\_\_\_\_ Sponsorship

Harvey Lauren, President  
Coastal Railroad  
9001 Commerce Street  
Deltaview, CA 93800

Dear Harvey,

I am writing to invite Coastal Railroad to participate in a wonderful local advertising opportunity with the \_\_\_\_\_. Our mission is to promote more and safer bicycling and walking for transportation and recreation, and we are making a huge impact in \_\_\_\_\_. Since our inception in 199\_\_, we have helped our \_\_\_\_\_ to acquire over \$\_\_\_ million to complete their bicycle and pedestrian facility improvements.

On Saturday, November \_\_, 200\_\_, \_\_\_\_ will hold our \_\_\_\_\_ fundraiser at \_\_\_\_\_. The event will feature a dynamic program including speakers, live music, dinner, dancing, and live and silent auctions.

The \_\_\_\_\_ is offering a limited number of Yellow, Green, and Polka Dot sponsorship packages to raise a total of \$25,000 for our organization's ongoing community advocacy work. Sponsors will receive promotion before, during and after the \_\_\_\_\_. Last year's event drew over 500, and we anticipate that this year's attendance will equal or exceed that. Our promotional materials are distributed throughout the \_\_\_\_\_ and many individuals see our website, newsletter, and e-mail bulletins.

We're accepting sponsor commitments through Friday, September \_\_ and we're hoping that Coastal Railroad would like to participate. In return, depending on the sponsorship level, Coastal Railroad will receive many benefits including:

- your logo on our event poster and on all printed advertisements
- a banner with your logo displayed at the event
- space at our event info table to display your promotional materials
- name acknowledgement as our sponsor in our event press releases
- logo recognition as our sponsor on our website with a link to yours

The following items regarding our sponsorship offer are enclosed to fully illustrate this opportunity:

- 2004 \_\_\_\_\_ Event Details
- Sponsorship Benefits
- 2003 \_\_\_\_\_ promotional postcard
- 2003 \_\_\_\_\_ poster copy

Thank you very much for your consideration and please give me a call with any questions. I will call to follow up on our offer in the next few weeks, after you have had time to review the materials.

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_, Associate Director

## Sample Sponsorship Opportunities Flyer, Abbreviated

### {EVENT TITLE, SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES}

As a \_\_\_\_\_ **Sponsor**, your company will be supporting a healthier community and receive exposure to thousands of \_\_\_\_\_ residents!

#### **Yellow Jersey \$5,000 plus**

- **Promotional Materials:** Your logo displayed prominently on our event's promotional poster, postcards, and flyers.
- **Media:** Acknowledgement as a Yellow Jersey sponsor of the \_\_\_\_\_ in all \_\_\_\_\_ press releases and related media outreach surrounding the event.
- **Advertising:** Prominent logo positioning as a Yellow Jersey sponsor in any \_\_\_\_\_ paid or donated advertising surrounding the event.
- **Banner:** A promotional banner exclusively displaying your logo and business name will be provided by \_\_\_\_\_ and displayed at the event.
- **Tabling:** Yellow Jersey sponsors will exclusively be provided with tabling space for promotional literature at the event's front lobby information table.
- **Recognition:** Acknowledgment as a Yellow Jersey sponsor of the \_\_\_\_\_ in its annual report, through an article in its print newsletter the \_\_\_\_\_, in weekly e-mail bulletins and through \_\_\_\_\_ website [www.\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_.org](http://www._____.org). Your business will be provided with our Business Membership window sticker for year-round recognition of your support.
- **Event:** VIP tickets for free entry, free bar service, and reserved front row table seating with Executive Director \_\_\_\_\_.

#### **Green Jersey \$2,500 - \$4,999**

.....  
.....

#### **Polka Dot Jersey \$1,000 - \$2,499**

.....  
.....  
\* \* \* \* \*

\_\_\_\_\_ is accepting sponsor commitments through September \_\_, 200\_\_.

Contact:

\_\_\_\_\_, Associate Director

P.O. Box \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_

(\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_-\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_@\_\_\_\_.org

[www.\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_.org](http://www._____.org)

**Thank You for Your Consideration!**

## Auction Items Tax-Deductibility

From [www.irs.gov/charities/charitable/](http://www.irs.gov/charities/charitable/)

"Donors who purchase items at a charity auction may claim a charitable contribution deduction for the excess of the purchase price paid for an item over its fair market value. The donor must be able to show, however, that he or she knew that the value of the item was less than the amount paid. For example, a charity may publish a catalog, given to each person who attends an auction, providing a good faith estimate of items that will be available for bidding. Assuming the donor has no reason to doubt the accuracy of the published estimate, if he or she pays more than the published value, the difference between the amount paid and the published value may constitute a charitable contribution deduction. In addition, donors who provide goods for charities to sell at an auction often ask the charity if the donor is entitled to claim a fair market value charitable deduction for a contribution of appreciated property to the charity that will later be sold. Under these circumstances, the law limits a donor's charitable deduction to the donor's tax basis in the contributed property and does not permit the donor to claim a fair market value charitable deduction for the contribution. Specifically, the Treasury Regulations under section 170 provide that if a donor contributes tangible personal property to a charity that is put to an "unrelated use", the donor's contribution is limited to the donor's tax basis in the contributed property. The term "unrelated use" means a use that is unrelated to the charity's exempt purposes or function, or, in the case of a governmental unit, a use of the contributed property for other than exclusively public purposes. The sale of an item is considered unrelated, even if the sale raises money for the charity to use in its programs."

Also,

"A charitable organization must provide a written disclosure statement to donors of a quid pro quo contribution in excess of \$75. A quid pro quo contribution is a payment made to a charity by a donor partly as a contribution and partly for goods or services provided to the donor by the charity. For example, if a donor gives a charity \$100 and receives a concert ticket valued at \$40, the donor has made a quid pro quo contribution. In this example, the charitable contribution portion of the payment is \$60. Even though the part of the payment available for deduction does not exceed \$75, a disclosure statement must be filed because the donor's payment (quid pro quo contribution) exceeds \$75. The required written disclosure statement must:

1. Inform the donor that the amount of the contribution that is deductible for federal income tax purposes is limited to the excess of any money (and the value of any property other than money) contributed by the donor over the value of goods or services provided by the charity, and
2. Provide the donor with a good faith estimate of the value of the goods or services that the donor received.

The charity must furnish the statement in connection with either the solicitation or the receipt of the quid pro quo contribution. If the disclosure statement is furnished in connection with a particular solicitation, it is not necessary for the organization to provide another statement when the associated contribution is actually received.

### Auction Items Tax-Deductibility (continued)

No disclosure statement is required when:

1. The goods or services given to a donor meet the standards for "insubstantial value" set out in Rev. Proc. 90-12, 1990-1 C.B. 471, and Rev. Proc. 92-49, 1992-1 C.B. 987 (as updated);
2. There is no donative element involved in a particular transaction with a charity (for example, there is generally no donative element involved in a visitor's purchase from a museum gift shop); or
3. <snip; lengthy qualifier unrelated to bike/ped 501(c)3's >

A penalty is imposed on a charity that does not make the required disclosure in connection with a quid pro quo contribution of more than \$75. The penalty is \$10 per contribution, not to exceed \$5,000 per fund-raising event or mailing. The charity can avoid the penalty if it can show that the failure was due to reasonable cause.

Donors taking a deduction under section 170 are required to obtain contemporaneous written substantiation for a charitable contribution of \$250 or more. To be "contemporaneous" the written substantiation must generally be obtained by the donor no later than the date the donor actually files a return for the year the contribution is made. If the donee provides goods or services to the donor in exchange for the contribution (a quid pro quo contribution), this written substantiation (acknowledgment) must include a good faith estimate of the value of the goods or services. The donee is not required to record or report this information to the IRS on behalf of a donor. The donor is responsible for requesting and obtaining the written acknowledgement from the donee. Although there is no prescribed format for the written acknowledgment, it must provide sufficient information to substantiate the amount of the contribution. For more information, see IRS Publication 1771."

All non-monetary sponsorships and donations are called "in-kind." When valuing in-kind sponsorships for sponsorship levels, use the value or cost to the sponsor, not the retail value.

Caution is needed with the multi-level approach. Nonprofits that put too much emphasis on the public relations benefits available for sponsors may find themselves competing for the advertising dollar. Usually, a nonprofit deals with a donations officer who is interested in the value of the project for its own sake. Instead, you may face the ad department. There you have to prove the PR value of the event is greater than spending the money on ads. This can be difficult. Also, make sure to value your sponsorships at their advertising value, not the revenue you need for your event.

## Major Sponsorships

Major sponsorships can be worth thousands of dollars. Systems of matching nonprofits with corporations are highly sophisticated. Careful

advance preparation is needed to arrange these major liaisons. The competition is stiff. Those organizations that receive sponsorship are typically ones that have a profile and image the sponsor wants to be aligned with. When you solicit sponsors, it is crucial for you to find the right fit. Major sponsors expect prominent exposure. One of the example galas has its three main sponsors and each of its three silent auctions bear the name of one of those sponsors (e.g. Tsali Bikes Auction, Surge Bars Auction, and PedSystems Auction).

Although you don't have to know a company inside and out before asking for sponsorship, you do need to know a few basic things about the company before you make the approach. You must know the demographics of the consumers to whom they market—who the customers are, as categorized by income, age, and geography. Then you must be able to show that your gala will connect with these consumers.

What can you expect a sponsor to do for you? The bottom line for most requests is usually financial funding. If the fit is particularly good between the gala and the sponsor, the company may help you do things like your marketing. When this happens, the happy result is that the gala's usually meager marketing budget (and sometimes marketing expertise) is vastly amplified.

## **Deductibility**

Nonprofits with tax-exempt status can offer donors receipts to reduce the amount of tax they pay. The Alliance recommends that all of its member organizations incorporate as 501(c)(3) in order to offer their donors this privilege. Organizations without this status can't, of course. Not having tax-deductible status yet may not hinder all donations, however. Many individuals happily contribute to causes they care for without concern for a tax deduction. Even when they can, many don't claim their deductions. If your 501(c)(3) paper work is in the works, you can state this in your event promotional materials and explain that all donations within the year you receive your (c)(3) status will be tax-deductible.

Make sure to write your thank-you letters on your organization's letterhead as well as include the event name, date, and donation amount so that your donors can use this letter to file for their deduction. Also make sure to state that their donation is "tax-deductible to the full extent of the law." This leaves the responsibility to the donor to fit the donations legally amidst their other deductions. Here are the basic rules.

- Gifts of money are tax deductible, whether made in cash, by checks, via credit card, or using money orders.
- Pledges are not deductible until they are paid.

- Gifts of goods are tax deductible at their fair market value.
- Gifts of services are not deductible. It is legal to exchange checks to solve this problem (see below for details).

## **Receipts for In-Kind Donations of Services**

Services are never tax-deductible; only goods are. A gourmet cook, computer programmer, lawyer, accountant, or painter may offer their services. These are services and labor. You cannot give them a tax-deductible receipt.

You can, however, legally exchange checks. This requires that you pay for the service. Then the individual donates the money to your charity, and you issue a tax-deduction receipt for the gift.

Unfortunately, this may not work for all donors, as they must declare the money you paid for the service as part of their taxable income. This usually offsets the advantage of the deduction.

## **Receipts for In-Kind Donations of Goods**

If someone gives you goods, you may give a tax receipt for their donation. It is not necessary to exchange checks first. Goods of little value are the exception and may not require a receipt.

On the tax receipt, show that it was an in-kind donation, and show the fair market value. That's what the item usually sells for. You may need to get outside estimates to confirm the value.

For example, if someone gives you a photocopy machine that sells everywhere for \$600, you can give them an official charitable tax receipt marked "Gift in kind \$600." It doesn't matter how much they paid for the machine, as long as it is clearly worth \$600. If you are not sure how much it is worth, establish the fair market value by asking knowledgeable people to evaluate it. Get a written estimate for valuable items.

## **Corporate Donations**

When companies make a contribution, they do not need a charitable tax-deduction receipt to write off the gift. They can claim a tax deduction for it as a cost of business, usually as a public-relations or promotional expense. This applies equally to gifts of cash, goods, and services.

That's not to say you can't issue a receipt, only that it is not necessary for tax purposes. The company may wish a receipt as an acknowledgement, but doesn't need an official charitable tax receipt for the government.

## **Raffle Tickets**

The amount someone pays for a raffle is not deductible as a charitable donation. Raffles, draws, and lotteries are purchasing a chance to win, not a gift. The price of the raffle ticket is not relevant. The rule applies equally to \$1 tickets and to \$100 tickets. The fact that a major portion of the ticket price is used to benefit the charity's projects does not make the ticket-price deductible.

## **Other Laws and Regulations**

Many local jurisdictions and states have laws affecting nonprofit organizations. Be sure to check with local authorities before launching a special event. These most frequently affect:

- lotteries, raffles and draws,
- liquor regulations and alcohol services,
- parade permits,
- permits for use of public or private places,
- restrictions on telephone canvassing, and
- maximum expenditures for administration and fundraising costs.

## **Why Can Events Fail**

There are thousands of different fundraising event ideas, but they all boil down to "give donors something for their money." The advantage of events is that people nervous about asking for money find it easier to make a request and guests find it easier to give. The events have added bonuses such as helping a group educate people, gain publicity, and find new friends.

## **What Are the Problems?**

Running an event is very similar to running a business. Alliance encourages its member organizations to look at all of their programs, events, and organizational development in this light.

Have a dinner gala and you are opening a restaurant for one night. Put on a music gala and you are in show business. Profits can be slim in these and other businesses, even when professionals run them year round. Restaurants go bankrupt every year. Musicians' poverty is legendary, except for a handful of stars. Many small businesses expect a three to five year struggle before they become profitable.

How much more difficult is it for amateurs to do well? Who else would expect to open a business, operate it for a single night, and immediately generate substantial surplus income? Yet it can be done!

The profits may come from surprising places, however. In movie theaters, for example, the sales of popcorn and refreshments can bring in more revenue than admission charges. Major recording artists often don't break even on tours. Large audiences paying top dollars for tickets and souvenirs may not produce enough revenue. Tours are frequently sponsored by companies the value of a tour may be measured in promotional publicity that increases record sales.

It is no surprise that nonprofits sometimes lose money on events despite countless hours of hard work by many volunteers. The surprise is how often they succeed.

## Why Do Special Events Fail?

Here are a few reasons why some special events fail.

- Costs are too high and prices are too low.
- Not enough tickets are sold.
- Expectations are unrealistic.
- Guests are not prepared to donate.

Some of the most overlooked problems include the following.:

1. **Front Money:** Front money is needed to pay bills before revenue comes in. Many organizations do not have a source of capital to bankroll the investment phase. If they use operating funds, a loss—or even a delay in payments—can interfere with programs. Some board members will advance personal funds or co-sign a loan. Although this can be risky, it is often the only solution.
2. **Underbidding:** Underbidding cuts income by setting prices below what a donor might give. Frequently, organizations decide the price by the lowest common denominator. The nonprofit doesn't want to exclude any supporters who can't afford high prices. As a result, a fundraising event turns into a community party that just breaks even—or worse, loses money.

Even when prices are higher, there are always some people who would give you as much or more as a pure donation, if you asked properly. Whether you offer a ticket for \$15 or for \$150, few people will offer to give more than the ticket price. Yet some of them can afford \$25 or \$250. They might give that much, if you asked. It's often your organizational goals they care about, not the event itself.

They might even be happier to give you money if they didn't have to attend the event! Yet you incur expenses and get less than they'd like to give.

3. **Careful Consumer Attitude:** A 'careful consumer' attitude makes donors reluctant to pay for tickets. Sell \$15 tickets for a dinner worth \$10 and they question the value. They may forget that you are not putting on the event to offer them a bargain, but to raise money. In addition, they believe they gave your organization a \$15 gift, not \$5, since that is their out-of-pocket cost. The expenses are not apparent to the donors.

This problem becomes most acute when selling products. A souvenir sweatshirt may cost your organization \$10 to produce. You may sell it for \$15. The donors may compare it to one at a discount store for \$5.

4. **Disaster Planning:** Disaster planning is overlooked too often. Murphy's Law applies to fundraising events. It remains true that if things can go wrong, they will. Contingency plans should be made in case of every emergency. Ask yourself every possible "What if ...?" question. Figure out the answers in advance. *What if not enough tickets are sold? What if the entertainment cancels at the last minute? What if a fight breaks out? What if someone is drunk and wants to drive? What if...*

## The Mathematics of Raising Money

Everyone has questions. *What does it cost to run an event? How many volunteers do we need? How much money will we make? How many tickets will we sell?* A formula would make it so simple to operate events. It's not that simple, of course. Every event is different. Every nonprofit organization is unique. There are thousands of factors you must consider.

Yet with all that, some standards can be suggested. Although these are only rough guidelines, they may help your planning. Please note the wide range of variations.

### Rule # 1, Cost Per Dollar Raised

Expect to invest 50 cents for every \$1 raised—a 50% profit, which is not bad by any standard. Try for better, but plan for this level.

Organizations occasionally report staging events without spending a cent. This is admirable, but they may not be counting other people's money (e.g. a sponsor may invest substantially). Include that money in your budget—as an expense and income.

In addition, organizations often fail to count the cost of staff time and overhead expenses involved in putting on an event. This may lull planners into a false sense of contentment. The costs are real and should be included.

Depending on what other goals are achieved, expenditures of more than 50% may be quite acceptable. An event may be considered a success with little or no income, if it is staged primarily to:

- win media attention and publicity,
- thank donors, volunteers or staff,
- find new donors or volunteers,
- educate the public, and
- involve clients/patients/users in activities.

## **Rule # 2, Volunteer Work Needed**

It should be considered essential to plan and record how many hours that volunteers work. Expect to invest two volunteer hours for every \$100 raised, in addition to financial investments. This means that volunteers ‘earn’ \$50/hour for the organization. That’s the surplus value they produce.

There is considerable variation, of course. The minimum goal should be \$10 per volunteer hour. Many organizations require four volunteer hours per \$100 or \$25/hr. It is essential that you estimate the dollar per hour ratio you anticipate, before you begin. Otherwise you may not have enough volunteers on hand. Reevaluate your estimate throughout the process and adapt as necessary.

## **Rule # 3, Maximum Ticket Sales**

On average, one person can sell ten tickets. For every one hundred tickets to be sold, you must have ten volunteer ticket sellers. Many organizations underestimate the difficulty of selling tickets; results can be disastrous.

Keep in mind that as the ticket price goes up, the volunteer’s ease of selling tickets goes down. Clearly, it is easier for them to sell \$1 tickets than \$100 tickets. This rule appears to be consistent whether the tickets are for an event or a raffle. Note also that it is often the case that 20% of the volunteers sell 80% of the tickets. Unfortunately, it isn’t always possible to predict in advance who the star salespeople will be.

Tickets are most easily sold by friends asking their friends. Tickets can be sold outside of ones circle of friends and associates, say, while tabling at a community festival. More aggressive sales tactics (beyond just sitting at a table waiting for prospects) usually produce better results. Note that sales from ads in the media are usually far

less than hoped. In fact, they frequently don't repay the cost of the ads.

Beware of those who buy the tickets themselves instead of selling them. It can result in a partly empty gala which can be embarrassing. Worse, it can hurt a performer's career if critics believe they can't attract a crowd. You must have a contingency plan. Some halls can be made smaller by unfolding a portable wall. Sometimes empty space can accommodate displays on your group's work. You can fill the seats with specially invited people (called "papering the hall") like seniors and school children. People who pay full price might be upset if they accidentally discover others came free or at a discount. One solution is to announce that the special guests are there as a community service. Ask the paying guests to welcome them with a round of applause.

# 5: Logistics

## Location and Setting

Location, location, location may not be as important as in real estate, but it plays a key part in both the expenses and the atmosphere of fundraising galas. Avoid locations that are hard to find, out of the way, or that have negative perceptions, no matter how inexpensive they are. Other keys related to “setting” of successful galas include things such as choosing dates, layouts, and programs that mesh with the event theme and your community.

## Where are Galas Held?

A gala can be held anywhere, but one of the big advantages of it over “traditional” bike/ped organization fundraisers like rides and races, is that they can be staged indoors; thus they are much less good-weather dependent. The type and demeanor of your gala may lead you to a specific type of facility. For example, a ballroom or concert hall may be suitable if a big part of your gala is the music and/or bands. A banquet facility, hotel ballroom, or fraternal hall with kitchen facilities may better suited if the gala emphasizes a sit-down and served dinner.

The six example galas used six different types of facilities ranging from a new community center to a full-fledged convention center. Choose a facility that fits your gala and meets your space, program, and budget requirements.

## Date and Time

Holding your fundraising event in the afternoon, of middle of the week, in the dead of summer may not be a good idea (unless your target audience is for school age children and their caretakers). Choose a date with no similar event in your community and that does not strain your other programs and the schedules of your staff and volunteers. Most of the example galas have dates that fall at the beginning or end of their local “cycling season.”

Auctioneers recommend holding auctions anytime in the normal “social season” from September to May. They like October through early December, as it can be a time when people see the auction as an opportunity to buy unusual presents.

## Sample Gala Task Schedule

June	July	August	September	October	November	December
Coordinate kick-off meeting and form committees	Coordinate Steering Committee meeting	Coordinate Steering Committee meeting	Coordinate Steering Committee meeting	Coordinate Steering Committee meeting	Coordinate Steering Committee meeting	Organize wrap-up meeting with Steering Committee
Facility, payment and use responsibilities confirmation		Acquire permits, licenses, insurances	Develop floor plan and distribute to committees	Print signage; develop décor theme and lighting plan	Complete any necessary projects for the success of the event	Submit final report and evaluation
Determine menu and begin food solicitation	Food solicitation-grocers and caterers	Food solicitation-grocers and caterers	Food solicitation-restaurants	Food solicitation-restaurants	Farmers Market solicitation for fresh produce	
Solicit merchandise donations (bike and non-bike) BIG items first	Ongoing merchandise solicitations; develop packets for local business inquiries	Ongoing merchandise solicitations	Ongoing merchandise solicitations	Ongoing merchandise solicitations	Silent auction items sorted, labeled, spreadsheeted; auction sheets written; thank you's written	Complete all thank you letters
Develop tiered-level sponsorship packet and solicit sponsors	Ongoing sponsor solicitation	Ongoing sponsor solicitation	Sponsor commitments by Friday 9/12 (for printing deadline)	All sponsors go on Website		
Solicit speakers and celebrities	Solicit speakers and celebrities	Speaker commitments by month end for printing deadline		Promote event on website		
Solicit bands	Solicit bands	Band commitment by month end for printing deadline		Contact affiliate organizations to announce event		
		Develop promotion "look"	Print poster, postcards, flyers by 9/22 (eight weeks before event)	Post posters in 1 <sup>st</sup> week. Mail post cards in 2 <sup>nd</sup> week		
		Announce in newsletter		Announce in more detail in newsletter		
		Solicit volunteers	Solicit volunteers	Volunteers firm by 10/24		
		Send two-month-prior press releases		Send one-month-prior press releases	Send press releases and make follow-up calls	

With the exception of the vastly different Example Gala F, all of the example galas currently hold their events on the weekend—Saturday (four of them) or Sunday (one of them). Some of galas have tried weeknights and Friday nights, but returned to Saturday/Sunday.

Again with the exception of Example Gala F (held from 7:30-8:45 AM), the example galas are four to five hours long starting between 5:30 and 7:00 PM and ending between 9:30 and 10:30 PM. The Alliance recommends going with the tried and true.

## **Space Planning and Flow**

Do not overlook carefully planning your space and the “traffic” flows of your gala event. Try to get a space that fits your anticipated needs. Even if you get an amply sized facility, avoid the look of emptiness through creative table placement, displays, and decorations. Even if you only plan a “no tables” hors d’oeuvres program, you need to have stand-up tables and plates-and-glasses discarding tables.

The entry, registration, auction sign-in/check-out, and welcoming areas need to have “good flow” and space. “Traffic jams” entering or leaving cause confusion.

## **Decorations and Table Set-ups**

Decorations and table set-ups can add to an event’s ambiance. They can also consume resources including volunteer time. Try to find a venue that provides ambiance, reducing the need to change impressions just for your gala’s guests. You want your guests’ thoughts on the reasons for the event, not solely the surroundings. If possible and within reasonable costs, consider having the venue or caterer do the decorations and table set-ups. You can also try to raise funds via special decorations. One of the example galas has specialty/personalized decorations for purchasers of an entire table’s admission tickets. Because of this they charge more for a full table, on a per ticket basis, than the price of individual tickets (contrary to conventional thought that one should get a discount for buying a table’s worth of admission tickets).

## **Task Scheduling**

Not allowing enough time to prepare for the event is one of the most serious mistakes. It’s also one of the most common. Successful events are many months in the making. Most start six months to a year ahead (see Sample Gala Task Schedule on previous page).

Some events can come together more quickly, with luck and experienced people. Excessive speed may be an invitation to disaster, however.

The length of time needed varies depending on the type and scale of the event, of course. No standard recipe can cover all situations. Here are some tips on developing your event's unique calendar accurately.

1. **Don't set the date until you analyze the time required:** Too often organizations establish the date of an event first. Then they realize how much work it requires. They try to compress the time needed for each task to fit into an impossible schedule. It seldom works.

Sometimes you must meet an externally imposed deadline. If that is the case, simplify the event to something possible in the time available.

2. **Involve several people in planning:** Don't expect any one person to anticipate all the tasks that need doing. A team is more likely to catch the missing elements. You can make a game of the brainstorming sessions. Set up teams of two to five people. Encourage the teams to think of all the tasks they can. Then compare notes and combine the lists.

Break each task into bite-size chunks, to make sure nothing is overlooked. Define the action steps needed. Write each task on a separate task card. Large post-it notes are excellent tools for this. Next, challenge the group to get them in the right order.

3. **Estimate the time required for each task:** Mark the estimated hours right on the task card. Note if it is one person doing the whole job or several. Sometimes it doesn't matter if you have a group involved - but occasionally it matters a lot.

For example, a task could take six person-hours. If the task is stuffing invitations in envelopes, it could be done equally well by six people working one hour or by one person working six hours. Carrying a piano up several flights of stairs, however, will take six people at least one hour. One person cannot do it in six hours.

Don't underestimate the time. In fact, most event planners recommend you increase time estimates by a minimum of 20 percent. Many suggest doubling the estimate. If you overestimate and finish ahead of schedule, it is unlikely to cause problems.

Allow a few extra days between stages, in case of delays. For example, if you choose to stuff invitations rather than having the printer do it, make sure the printer's deadline calls for delivery of the finished product a week before stuffing day. Then, if they actually arrive a few days later than expected, you have built-in protection.

4. **Determine inter-dependent tasks:** Note which tasks must be complete before others can begin. Make sure the people doing these key tasks understand the consequences if they are late. The people who will mail the invitations, for example, can't do their job until their predecessors have:

- prepared the address list,
- booked the hall,
- confirmed the entertainment,

## Sample Day of Event Schedule

JOBS & TIMES	5:00	5:30-6:00	6:30	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30-11:00
Check-In 1	Finish set up, change, get familiar with venue	Volunteer training – brief training on all jobs									Tear down
Check-In 2											
Check-In 3											
Check-In 4											
Check-In 5											
Bartend 1											
Bartend 2											
Bartend 3											
Bartend 4											
Barker											
Tickler 1											
Tickler 2											
Auction Super A1											
Auction Super A2											
Auction Super B1											
Auction Super B2											
Auction Super C1											
Auction Super C2											
Caterer Help											
Caterer Help											
Tally 1											
Tally 2											
Tally 3											
Tally 4											
Runner 1											
Runner 2											
Runner 3											
Cashier 1											
Cashier 2											
Cashier 3											
Item Clerk											

- settled the price,
- printed the invitations, and
- purchased envelopes and stamps.

5. **Post the schedule on the wall and give everyone pocket-size copies:** Everyone should be able to see the progress quickly and easily. Problems should be instantly obvious.

Use flip chart paper, rolls of newsprint, or blackboards to create a master calendar. Put the weeks across the top. Down the left side, list the key work areas such as publicity, printing, entertainment, food, ticket sales and so on.

Mark specific work to be done in the week it must begin. Then mark the due date. Showing only the date the work is due leads to last-minute panic.

Make a small copy and give one to every person involved. Highlight the tasks that involve them personally with a colored marker. In another color, highlight the tasks that cannot be done until he/she successfully completes his/her tasks.

If the schedule changes, make new copies for everyone. It may seem like a lot of work, but it will keep people on task. Date each new edition, so everyone knows they're working on the same version.

Encourage everyone to enter information in their personal day-planning books.

6. **Determine “Do-or-Die” Dates:** Establish deadlines for essential tasks. Mark these in red on all calendars. If they are not done on time, cancel the event. That said, know what commitments make canceling impossible. Once you've booked a facility, it may not be possible to cancel without penalties or losses or even to re-schedule.

Establish contingencies for less critical problems. “If X doesn't happen, then we can't do Y. As a back-up, we'll do A or B.”

Don't wait to figure out what you'll do at the time of the crisis. It may seem like a waste of time to sort out all the alternatives in advance, but it is an essential step.

7. **Check progress before delays become a crisis:** Determine when work should begin to be completed on time. Set benchmarks at intervals to see if the work is on schedule. If there is a problem, you must know about it before the deadline .

Check progress along the way. People with the best of intentions, may not follow through. There are two good methods:

The first is to give one person the responsibility of checking progress. As a gentle nag, the right person can do wonders. Knowing it is an institutionalized role reduces the emotional stress for both the nagger and the naggee.

Alternatively, assign crucial tasks to two people, as co-chairs. Encourage them to use the buddy system to check progress. Be careful the work doesn't fall between the cracks, as each co-chair thinks the other is responsible.

In either case, he or she should call well in advance of due dates as a reminder. Say, "I see you'll be halfway through the invitation list next week. How's it going? Anything you need help on? Will they be ready for the stuffing-party September 1<sup>st</sup>? If there's a problem let me know now!"

If the invitation stuffers expect to go to work September 1<sup>st</sup>, for example, here are some of the previous benchmarks. Your time allowances may vary, of course.

- July 7: All leaders agree to provide names and addresses for list
- July 7: Budget approved
- July 25: Text and rough design approved
- July 31: Final approval of printed material
- August 1: Material sent to the printer
- August 1: Typing of list begins
- August 20: List ready
- August 24: Back from the printer

8. **Anticipate the follow-up work:** After the event is over, a great deal of work always remains. Have your fresh work crews in place for these tasks well in advance.

Some follow up tasks that get overlooked include these:

- Clean up after the guests have left.
- Count the income and make the night deposit.
- Return rented supplies or excess inventory.
- Send receipts for donations and thank-you letters.
- Send thanks to volunteers and supporters.
- Close off the account books.
- Evaluate the event, produce a report, and adjust event guide for next time.

9. **Have a squad of troubleshooters:** For work that may be overlooked and for emergencies before and at the event, have a team of skilled generalists at hand to act.
10. **Reward people for jobs well done:** Provide incentives for getting the job done ahead of schedule and under budget. People do respond to rewards, even though they may think they will not. For example, offer a prize for the first person to sell their allotment of tickets. On a teamwork night, schedule the job to finish by 9 pm and order pizza for delivery then. At the event itself, mention people who deserve extra recognition for their work.

## Volunteers and Staff

One of the great problems of special events is the shortage of volunteers. Events do take a lot of labor-power. A small board can be overwhelmed. Staff alone can never keep up. If you hire too many people to run the event, the costs go through the roof.

Fortunately, there are some people who love organizing events. You may not know any now, but you can recruit them, more easily than you think. Here are the secrets.

1. **Do the homework of special events fundraising:** Find out how to organize the event. What jobs will you need to create and recruit individuals for? Do this homework by reviewing the plans and results of previous events of a similar nature. Look at the experience of your own organization. Examine events hosted by another agency in your community. Experienced organizers will alert you to essential volunteer roles you might not discover you need until it's too late!
2. **Create an organizational chart:** An organizational chart is helpful for two reasons. First, you will have a chance to clarify roles and relationships between various players in the special event organization. Second, you have a tool to use to recruit and orient others. Then everyone knows how he/she fits into the big picture. You may want to include a Volunteer Recruitment Coordinator in your plan, so that there's someone designated to recruit others.
3. **Do a basic calendar of organizing:** Plot a schedule. Base it on your research, your own experience and your planning skills. Work backwards from the date of the event to be sure you have enough lead-time for each activity. Allow time for mistakes, delays and a little procrastination by your organizers.

**4. Develop job descriptions for each task within the plan:**

Before you recruit volunteers, you must know what they have to do. In addition, people are entitled to know what's expected of them before they agree to take on a task. Including the purpose and responsibilities of a job is fundamental to good volunteer management. Include notes on:

- time required,
- length of commitment,
- qualifications or skills required,
- orientation or training provided, and
- benefits to gain.

You can find examples in past events. You can ask someone who has done the job before to write down what their task involves. Get it on paper.

**5. Recruit the best possible person for each job:** Make sure everyone knows that you need help. Post the job descriptions on your office's bulletin board, on your web site, and in e-mail alerts. Include "help wanted" ads in your newsletter. Contact the volunteer organization in your community and ask for help in these activities.

Volunteers can also be recruited from specific organizations. The Junior League, a national service organization of women, for example, has an excellent training program to improve its members' skills. They place members with nonprofit organizations to help them improve their systems. Retired people are another source of extraordinary talent. In some communities, you can recruit with the help of organized senior citizens' associations.

For specialized skills and campaign leaders, you need a more stringent, face-to-face recruitment.

**6. Encourage the event's leaders to contact the potential candidates:** The chairs of the event should interview the potential candidates, just as if they were hiring for a job. Even if there is only one possible candidate, this communicates your seriousness. It usually makes the task more attractive. Use the job descriptions, calendar and organizing chart. The chair's goal is to determine if the person is interested, able to do a good job, and available.

**7. Immediately recognize the recruitment of volunteers:**  
Send each volunteer that you select a letter confirming his/her

appointment. Include a copy of current plans for the event. Invite him/her to an organizing meeting.

8. **To be effective, volunteers must have information and perspective:** Keep in contact with volunteers. Hold pre-event meetings. Be sure they are fulfilling their responsibilities and catch any problems early. Help them if problems do occur. Encourage creativity and commitment. Keep them apprised of the overall picture.
9. **Have a Pre-Event Meeting:** Having a meeting just before the event or even the day before the event, should help all go smoother.
10. **Recognize hardworking volunteers—at the event itself and afterwards:** Recognition consists of saying “thank you” and asking for constructive criticism. Remember these people came to know the realities of a job. Collecting their comments soon after an event improves the event next time.

## **Insurance**

It's worth the cost to insure your event against eventualities such as:

- injuries related to someone attending your event, either on your site or afterwards, including a vehicle crash (especially serving/selling alcohol),
- damage to the premises where the event is held, or
- theft of property during an event.

Check with the owners of your event venue. They may have these covered. Some organizations have also taken out insurance to compensate the nonprofit if the event has to be cancelled because of bad weather or the failure of the entertainment to appear. This can be expensive, but may be worthwhile if the event itself is costly.

## **Food Options**

As seen in the Galas At A Glance (page 9) and the example galas (pages 12-17), there is a range of food options. Much depends on what type of event you wish to stage and the resources you budget. If you are doing a flashy celebration with a live auction and expecting guests to dress up, you might consider the most appropriate food option to be a sit-down and served gourmet dinner. If you are doing a loud-and-proud party

with bands and you want people to walk and mingle, you might consider hors d'oeuvres and a few sitting tables. Decide what type of gala that you want and how to best achieve that goal. The best food options should come clear as you start getting quotes and budgeting.

Donations of food and the services of a restaurant, chef, or caterer keep down costs. If the meal is an important component of the gala though, you may decide that paying for a known service and product is more dependable.

## **Beverages**

Alcoholic beverages are a key component of all but one of the example galas. That one is the weekday morning Example Gala F. The organizers of each of the other example galas try to get beer and wine donated. One is fortunate enough to get a “tie-in” product each year (Fat Tire Beer) while another also sells mixed drinks.

Most considerations for serving alcoholic beverages are mentioned in other parts of this document (see pages 21, 53, and 67). On top of those, realize the gala facility may have a “pouring fee” if you serve your donated products. They may also require you to use their bartenders at a fee. There may be local ordinances requiring the hiring of extra law enforcement officers if alcohol is served.

## **Audiovisuals**

If you use any type of speakers, presentations, awards, or celebrities/dignitaries, you need to have accompanying audiovisuals. The audiovisual materials and equipment need to improve as the number of guests increases and the gala becomes more sophisticated. Speaking guests typically request special AV assistance.

Allow enough time for the speaker to rehearse with their audiovisual materials well in advance of the start of the program. For some speakers, that may mean showing up at least one hour before the start of the event. For others with more elaborate needs, it may require an on-site visit the day before the event.

Build in recovery time when dealing with computers, projectors, and copying files from a presenter's disk. When it comes to technical difficulties, anything and everything can go wrong, even if it has never happened before. As an event organizer, you should request that all speakers send their materials in advance.

# 6: Guests

**D**eciding to whom you will market your gala is critical. It impacts nearly everything in your planning—the facility size and location, the program, the food and drink, your ticket pricing, and pre-event ticket sales plan. Example Galas A sells out well before the event each year and plans to move to a larger facility to allow growth. Another of the example galas had only one-third (36%) of its expected registrants a week and a half out from the event. Primarily using an e-mail blast, they received one-half (50%) of their registrants in the last week.

Note, also, the method of using table captains in Example Gala F (page 17). The level of pre-event commitment of your guests has a lot to do with their commitment to your gala's fundraising success.

## Admission or not and Pricing Strategies

Even though one example gala charges its members no admission fee and another charges its members \$5, Alliance recommends an admission charge that covers the direct costs of the event itself, even auctions. Direct costs include renting the facility, printing, sending invitations, providing food, and general administration costs. Note that the two no/low fee example galas do gain a significant number of new members and they manage to have bottom line ratios comparable to the others.

Don't undercharge—it is not sensible to insist that the fee be \$35 when the costs are closer to \$50, for fear that some would not attend at the higher price. "Supporters" that can't afford the extra \$15 admission would be unlikely to make additional donations at the event or bid at the auction.

If your admission fee is correct, you can avoid stopgap measures like charging extra for an auction catalogue, a bidding paddle, or other essential auction ingredients. Other than a cash bar, if you serve alcohol, the admission fee should cover all expenses. Let guests use their money on donations and auction items.

## Signing Up New Members

Gaining new members for your organization can be a benefit of fundraising galas, if most of the guests are not already members. Two of the example galas specifically target new members, each gaining about 100 every year. In fact, their admission fees are structured to highly

encourage joining—one has free entry to members with the entry fee doubling as a membership fee. The other charges \$5 for members. It is not known if this leads to good membership renewals centered on the event date and how that may affect those organization's budgets and membership drives. The other three Alliance example galas have minimal or no difference in their member/non-member admission fees.

## **Pre-Registration**

It is always best to have gala guests register and pay for their admission in advance. This helps greatly with event planning and organizer's sanity, and it could lead to the good fortune of selling out before the event.

## **Check-in/Registration**

The need to have an official check-in process varies with the type of gala that is being planned. A formal one is a necessity with live auctions. It can also help with large and/or multiple silent auctions. For events with only raffles and very small silent auctions, check-in may not be worth the efforts. A sample silent auction check-in procedure is provided on page 32.

## **Check-out (Required If Doing Auctions)**

Getting people to efficiently pay at the end can be the greatest struggle of the event, especially if everyone tries to leave at the same time. A sample check-out procedure is supplied on page 34.

# 8: Getting More Out of the Event

## **New Contacts, Too!**

The names and addresses of people who buy your tickets, whether for the event or a raffle, can be valuable. Those who support you once will probably do so again. This is one of the best ways to get names and addresses for future mailings

## **Door Prizes / Fish Bowl Drawings**

Door prizes are one of the most effective methods of getting names and contact information. There should be more than one prize (a dozen or more). A greater chance will make people more likely to join in. Simple prizes will do. They should be donated, if possible. Perhaps a local restaurant will provide a free dinner for two. A theatre might offer passes for the movies. A publisher could give a coffee-table art book.

A fish-bowl draw works like this: ask guests to drop a business card into a bowl or box. Provide paper and pencil for those with no cards. Offer prizes for a draw. Business cards provide you with added information:

- people's occupations: perfect for recruiting skills you need for volunteers, such as accountants, writers, sales people,
- contacts for corporate donations: if managers come to your facilities, consider asking them for support in applications, and
- statistics on major users for grant requests: if you can show that a significant number of a company's staff came to your event, you increase your chances of getting a grant from the company.

## **Guest Books and Petitions**

A guest book at the door works in certain circumstances where other techniques may be inappropriate. However, many people will

pass it by, especially if there is a crowd at the door. Others may write illegibly or leave only a partial address.

Petitions can also work for advocacy organizations. They provide a list of names and addresses of people who feel strongly about the same issue as you do. Add non-members who sign to your prospect database. Let them know what the results of the campaign were. Ask for their help for the next phase. This provides an opportunity to build a politically and financially rewarding relationship.

## **What Do You Do with the Names?**

Contact your prospects at least once a year. Within a week or two of a special event you can send a note thanking people for coming. Tell them how successful the event was. Ask for extra donations to reach the goal or ask them to add next year's event to their budget and to pencil in the date. Within three to four months, write or phone to ask for help on different projects.

Invite them to the next special event. If they had fun at an annual event, 50% or more will come again. If you offer several events a year, it may be appropriate to invite people who attended one to attend others. Include them in direct mail appeals and member prospect mailings.

## **More Money, Too!**

Too often at special events, nonprofits earn relatively little money for the extraordinary amount of effort. Admission charges, cash bars, and passing the hat sometime barely bring enough revenue to cover direct costs.

Experience from many events shows that blank checks and a good speech can multiply donations. Provide blank checks and encourage donors to use them if they don't have their own checkbooks handy. Blank checks increase the average gift amount dramatically over passing a hat.

## **A Few Words on Blank Checks**

**Encourage people to use their own checks whenever possible.** Before deciding to use blank checks, check to see if the banks in your community charge extra fees on blank checks because they do not have the account number encoded in magnetic ink. The person who writes the check usually pays the service charge. Banks may waive the extra charge for a nonprofit. If they can't do that, they may let your group pay the service charge instead of the donors. On large donations, that's worthwhile. If not, phone donors who have accounts at such institutions. Explain the situation and ask them to send a replacement check.

**What should the blank check look like?** Blank checks can be typed and photocopied or purchased at stationery shops. See the sample below.  
Note the sample has ½ inch space at the bottom for the bank's coding

## Sample Blank Check

<p>THANK YOU!</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>Amount \$ _____</p> <p>For Donation To: {name of your group} {group's address} {city, state, zip} {phone}</p> <p>A 501(c)3 non-profit organization</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes I want to {fill in your cause}</p> <p>Name _____ Date _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p>City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____</p> <p>Phone _____</p> <p>Pay to the order of {name of your group}: AMOUNT \$ _____</p> <p>SUM OF _____ / 100 DOLLARS</p> <p>Bank/Credit Union _____ ACCOUNT NUMBER _____</p> <p>SIGNATURE _____</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Please send me more information</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> VISA <input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard Account # _____ Expires __ / __</p>
---	---

machine. It also has a blank for credit card donations—these tend to be 20% higher than check donations. You don't need to make an impression of the credit card. It is sufficient to write in the card number, expiration date, amount and the person's name and address. If you are not set up to take credit card donations, most banks can offer you simple and inexpensive process.

**Why provide blank checks?** Less than 25% of men carry their checkbooks with them routinely. Among women, 30–40% typically do not have checkbooks with them and even fewer carry checks at formal occasions. People with checks are free to give generously. With cash, however, they wonder if the money in their wallets will last until their next trip to the bank.

Typically, when passing the hat, most people put in coins or small bills—\$2 or \$5. A \$20 bill usually means someone has taken change. When blank checks are available, donations at fundraisers have typically averaged \$10. Some people will donate up to \$100 or \$200. People also have the option of writing one or more post-dated checks. This makes it even easier to be generous.

Donors also have a means of getting a tax-deduction receipt for a check, but this is not as easy for anonymous gifts of cash. Also important, the organization captures the name and address of each donor for use in future fundraising. Make sure to do this with regular checks too.

If your organization accepts credit cards, make sure to also provide cards that guests can fill in with their name, credit card number, expiration date, address and amount.

## Words that Win Larger Contributions

Ask for donations just before intermission. Afterwards people may leave. Earlier, people haven't warmed enough. Also:

1. **Tell people right away that you are going to ask for money:** Don't surprise them. Hopefully they will have gotten this message from your pre-event promotions, too.
2. **Catch their attention:** Use humor. Others prefer to play it straight. Make sure your tone is appropriate to the audience and to you.
3. **Relax:** If you are nervous, take a partner up to the podium with you to take turns on parts of the appeal. This way one can fill in what the other might forget. Also, consider telling the audience you're nervous. They may be feeling uncomfortable and such an admission will help everyone relax.
4. **Use audience participation:** People may feel restless, particularly after hearing serious speeches or music. In preparation for asking them to give, ask them to be part of the event, not just observers. Start quietly. Most people are shy and reluctant to join in public participation. Then build momentum and volume to create excitement.

For example, ask people to whisper a chant for better bicycling and walking. Then repeat it loud enough to be heard by everyone here, then to people outside, then to folks downtown. Even louder then, to carry all the way to the state capitol. Even louder still for Washington, DC. And finally as loud as they can, so it is heard all the way around the world. The chant can be anything. Consider phrases like "We want bike friendly streets" or "Complete the Streets" or "Kids need safe routes to school."

Clearly this is suitable only for certain types of galas and on selected occasions. The effect is powerful when it is used, however.

5. **Tell people what the money is for:** Explain the problems and the solutions. Break projects into bite-size chunks. Perhaps \$5 will buy a safety vest for a child biking to school and \$100 will buy a "Share The Road" sign.

**Guided visualizations are very effective:** During a controlled test without visualizations, donations dropped 25%. Here's how it works in an example you can easily adapt to your organization's work:

Ask people to close their eyes. "Imagine \$30. Now imagine that in pennies. Imagine how much 3,000 pennies weighs and how much space it takes. Now, in your mind's eye, spread the pennies out on a street, with a few inches between them. Now imagine each penny turning into an educational pamphlet. That's all they cost to print—one cent each. Imagine the pamphlets lined up end to end down the street. That would stretch 20 blocks long. Imagine one person reading each pamphlet: 3,000 people. Some may throw it away, of course. But others will pass it on to a friend or two. Each is one more person who understands about the issues. Your \$30 gift can reach out to 3,000 people. Won't you contribute to 3,000 education touchpoints tonight?"

7. **Avoid too much pressure:** Tell people, "guilt will not be used to get donations tonight. For those who cannot afford a gift tonight, instead please tell a few others about our work—that is an important contribution. For those who can afford \$15 or \$25, thank you... we will make sure the money is put to the best possible use."
8. **Encourage large donations:** Say, "I know there are one or two people here who can afford to give \$100, \$200, and even more tonight. You know who you are. We hope you will give to the best of your ability." This phrase consistently leads to at least one or two donations in this range. Others in the audience give \$50 and \$75 because the bar has been raised.
9. **Give out blank checks and credit card acceptance cards during the fundraising appeal:** Have volunteers distribute these to each row or table. Or, plan in advance to include them inside the gala's program, if each person gets one. Explain they are to help those who want to give.
10. **Get a public pace-setting donation.** Arrange in advance for a well-known supporter to make a larger donation on stage. This should be a person the audience will respect and identify with—not too rich. People do follow an example.
11. **Pass buckets through the audience to collect donations as you finish the fundraising speech:** Don't just ask people to hand in donations at the door or at a literature table. In the crush as people leave, some who want to give may not get through, or may just forget. The bucket should be large enough not to

overflow and to afford privacy. It is a good idea to ‘prime the pump’ with a folded blank check and a few large denomination bills.

12. **Don’t break for intermission until the buckets have been around:** While the buckets are being passed, run through a few other details. This is important information. It also fills the few minutes while people concentrate on their gifts. Here are the points to cover.

- a) “If you don’t know your checking account number for the blank checks, be sure to put your phone number below your address. A volunteer will call you in the next day or two.” Make sure you have people ready to do this.
- b) Give out pens for people who need them.
- c) Assure people you do still accept cash.
- d) You will want to get as many names and addresses as possible, including those who can’t give. Ask them to be part of an urgent action network or a phone tree. The least effective thing to say is “add you name to our mailing list.” Invite people who aren’t giving to put their names and addresses on the back of a blank check and put it in the container.
- e) Encourage post-dated checks. Suggest that some people may prefer to give \$25 a month for four months or \$10 a month for ten months. This makes it possible for people to give larger amounts painlessly.
- f) Tell people how to fill in the blank check, line by line. There are always a few who forget to sign it or put the wrong date on.

13. **Close with strength:** Reinforce why the need is so urgent.

14. **Before the event ends, come back and announce the total given:** Thank everyone thoroughly. This makes them feel appreciated. It also encourages late donations. About ten percent more money comes in if you do this.

## Publicity and Media, Too!

For the most part, the organizers of the example galas do not seek much public media coverage nor do they expect media to be at their event. A celebrity and honoring community leaders may increase expectations. Also, note the media exposure expected by sponsors. Each of the example gala organizations do however, use their galas extensively for their own media purposes. Their newsletters and websites (and likely other materials) are filled with announcements of the galas, information and photos from the galas, and recounts and accounting of the gala results.

## Sample Press Release



**Inside** | *communications*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Graham Watson to Unveil New Book at Alliance for Biking and Walking Benefit Event

Prescott, AZ – September 17, 2004 – Inside Communications, publisher of VeloNews and other sports magazines, has teamed up once again with the Alliance for Biking and Walking for a celebrity event that will benefit Thunderhead's 50 States, 50 Cities Project for bicycle advocacy. On Friday October 29th at La Strada – Top of the Plaza in downtown Chicago, Graham Watson, world renowned bicycle race photographer, will entertain guests with stories and the very first viewing of his 2004 race season photographs, 38 floors above Lake Michigan as guests enjoy hors d'oeuvres and a four course Italian dinner.

Maxxis International has stepped up for the second year in a row as title sponsor of this Alliance benefit event, this year entitled "Landscapes of Cycling by Graham Watson." Presented in conjunction with the new Chicago VeloSwap® which follows the next day, this event will be the first time Graham's new book will be available. Guests will have the first chance at these hot-off-the-press, signed, collectors editions. Besides the fine Italian meal and show, all guests will receive a collectable autographed Graham Watson poster.

Tickets for the event are \$100 each and can be purchased by calling Inside Communications at 303-440-0601 x222 or e-mailing [info@veloswap.com](mailto:info@veloswap.com). Provide your ticket request, name and phone number and they will contact you to process your order.

Proceeds from the event will benefit the Alliance's 50 States/50 Cities Project with the goal of having effective state and local bicycle advocacy organizations in all 50 states and at least the 50 top population U.S. cities. The Chicagoland Bicycle Federation (CBF) is one of Thunderhead's current membership of 104 organizations in 46 states. CBF's noteworthy accomplishments in the Chicago area have helped Thunderhead set high standards as they provide guidance to new organizations.

Event organizers are seeking additional sponsors to help make this event a success. If you would like to become a sponsor, please contact Sue Knaup, the Alliance's Executive Director: [sue@peoplepoweredmovement.org](mailto:sue@peoplepoweredmovement.org) or 928-541-9841 or Dave Whittingham, VeloSwap Director: [dwhittingham@insideinc.com](mailto:dwhittingham@insideinc.com) or 303-440-0601 x180.

For more information on the event: [http://www.veloswap.com/Maxxis\\_Graham.html](http://www.veloswap.com/Maxxis_Graham.html)

For more information on the Alliance: <http://www.peoplepoweredmovement.org>

For more information on the Chicago VeloSwap®: <http://www.veloswap.com>

# # #

## **Press Releases/Advertisement**

The example galas use press releases primarily to announce and advertise their events. Some also prepare press releases on their award recipients and such. One of them has placed postcards in bike shops and purchased magazine advertising space. A sample press release from an Alliance event is provided on page 76.

## **Invitations**

The event invitation needs to advertise the special event and attract guests. It should incorporate the theme of the event, which can be used to market the event from year to year breeding familiarity. An invitation list must also be created. If that list is ready, a printing firm (for a fee of course) can stuff the envelopes, individually address the invitations, and even mail them.

## **Photographer**

A photographer can serve several functions. One is to document the event for posterity and your organization's own publications. Another, is for the benefit of guests (a way to capture and commemorate the event). And yet another, as mentioned earlier, is an opportunity to bring in additional funds either by getting a cut of a professional photographer's photo fee or using your own staff or volunteers to photograph the guests with any of the event's special guests.

# 9. After the Event

**E**ven when the event is over, you still have more work to do. Do an objective review and analysis to help you make adjustments for next year's event while they are still fresh on your mind. Check with key volunteers and your board members to get their perspective and ideas on how to improve the event. Let them be your ears and eyes. Given the opportunity, volunteers can make observations on where they saw bottlenecks or challenges and can possibly present the solutions at the same time. Add these to any evaluations you receive from guests.

Another major component of follow-up after an event is sending thank-you letters to donors and sponsors who make the event possible. Most organizations prioritize this task to within one to two weeks after the event. All donors receive a thank-you letter within one week after the event, according to Example Gala B. If you're one of their top ten to twenty donors, you also receive a personal phone call.

As part of the follow-up process for Example Gala A, all donors and guests receive a thank-you letter (and donation form) two weeks after the gala asking them to budget for next year's event. Giving guests the courtesy of advance notice for next year's gala in a thank-you letter gets your gala on their calendars early as well as planting the suggestion to make a donation, even in goods or services for the auction. This way, you're working smarter and starting your procurement process early by giving enough advance notice about the need for auction items.

Thanking everyone thoroughly reinforces why their participation was so necessary to the success of the event. Announce the total amount raised from the gala. Remind people how their money will be used and give specific examples of the bicycle and pedestrian advocacy problems and solutions their donation will assist.

If, after reading this *Guide to Fundraising Galas*, you feel your organization is ready to take on a gala of its own, go for it! If you have questions or suggestions, please contact us at:  
[info@peoplepoweredmovement.org](mailto:info@peoplepoweredmovement.org)

And don't forget to have fun!

# Appendix 1:

## Other Sources of Information

This *Guide* compiles information from Alliance organizations, non-member organizations, and publications about fundraising events. The following are a few other potential sources of information that may be helpful (this is not bibliography, a recommendation, nor an endorsement—just a listing). If you do not see your favorite book on fundraising galas on this list, please send us the information so we can add it to future editions.

### Books

*How to Raise Top Dollars from Special Events*, by Mira Sheerin,  
Public Service Materials Centre, 111 North Central Avenue,  
Hartsdale, NY 10530

Good advice on all kinds of events. Chapters on awards events, charity balls, auctions, etc.

*The Auction Book*, by Betsy Beatty and Libby Kirkpatrick  
The Society for Nonprofit Organizations, Suite 1, 6314 Odana Road,  
Madison, WI 53719

A comprehensive fundraising resource for nonprofit organizations.

*Benefit Auctions: A Fresh Formula for Grassroots Fundraising*, by  
Sandy Bradley  
Pineapple Press Inc., PO Box 3889, Sarasota, FL 34230  
Guide by experienced organizer and auctioneer for nonprofits and arts fundraiser events.

*The Grass Roots Fundraising Book*, by Joan Flanagan  
The Youth Project, 1000 Wisconsin Avenue NW, Washington, DC  
20007

*The Successful Volunteer Organization*, by Joan Flanagan  
Beaverbooks Limited, 150 Lesmill Road, Don Mills, Ontario M3B 2T5  
Both of these are thorough, pragmatic, useful, upbeat texts.

*Fundraising For Nonprofit Groups*, by Joyce Young  
Self-Counsel Press, 1481 Charlotte Road, North Vancouver, British  
Columbia V7J 1H1  
Written for grassroots organizations. Must reading. Short, easy to  
digest.

*Handbook of Special Events for Nonprofit Organizations*, by Edwin R.  
Leibert  
Association Press, 450 W. 33rd St., New York, NY 10001  
Tested ideas on fundraising and public relations

*101 Ways to Raise Resources*, by Sue Vinyard and Steve McCurley  
Heritage Arts Publishing, 1807 Prairie Avenue, Dainers Grove, IL  
60515  
Interesting ideas and great cartoons. One of several they wrote in the  
Brainstorm Series.

*Donors & Dollars*, by Epsilon Data Management  
50 Cambridge Street, Burlington, Massachusetts 01803  
A pocket-sized 20-page, free, booklet with useful charts on fundraising  
finances.

## Periodicals

*Special Events*  
Miramar Publishing, 2048 Cotner Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90025  
[www.specialevents.com](http://www.specialevents.com). May be free to qualified charities. Includes  
behind-the-scenes information on the requirements of special events.

*Grassroots Fundraising Journal*  
517 Union Avenue, Knoxville, TN 37902  
[www.grassrootsfundraising.org](http://www.grassrootsfundraising.org). Recognizes that small organizations  
are different. Solid articles introducing techniques.

*The Nonprofit Times*  
P0 Box 7286, Princeton, NJ 08543-7285 [www.nptimes.com](http://www.nptimes.com). Useful  
tips and general background information in potentially free tabloid  
newspaper.

## Online

“Pitfalls of Silent Auction Planning”, by Jay Fiske,  
[www.hartgregorygroup.com/NWBA/pitfalls.htm](http://www.hartgregorygroup.com/NWBA/pitfalls.htm).

“Best Practices Guide for Auctions”, by Auction Pay,  
[www.auctionpay.com/client-resources/best-practices.aspx](http://www.auctionpay.com/client-resources/best-practices.aspx).

# Appendix 2:

## The Event-Ability Quiz

© 1988 Ken Wyman

	POINTS
<b>The Organization's Experience</b>	
10 points for each fundraising special event your group has run in the last 5 years.	
An additional 10 points for each time your group has run the same event you're currently considering.	
Deduct 9 points for each of the previous events above if there are no detailed records evaluating the event and showing how to do it better.	
Deduct 10 points if none of the current staff who will be involved with the event were on staff during the previous events.	
Add 15 points if a staff person has had major involvement in running an event very similar to this for another organization.	
<b>Volunteer Team</b>	
2 points for each volunteer who will take an active part in running the event.	
5 points for every volunteer who has experience as a leader in previous special events, for your group or any other nonprofit.	
1 point for every 10 hours of volunteer time you can realistically count on in running the event.	
2 points for every volunteer who will personally sell 10 tickets or more.	
5 points for every volunteer who has experience as a leader in previous special events, for your group or any other nonprofit.	
1 point for every 10 hours of volunteer time you can realistically count on in running the event.	
2 points for every volunteer who will personally sell 10 tickets or more.	
100 points if you create job descriptions for each lead volunteer that specify what is required in terms of the number of hours of work, the length of commitment, and the qualifications, and also specify the support training you'll offer, and the benefits of the job.	
25 points for each new volunteer you recruit specifically because she or he has ability to do the job, not because you were desperate for any warm body to help.	
Add 2 points for each new volunteer recruited specifically to help on the event who you expect will still be active with your organization afterwards.	
Deduct 5 points for each current volunteer who will not do any further work with your organization without resting 6 months or more after the event.	
250 points if you have a system to ensure that all the people involved are doing their jobs on schedule, before a crisis hits.	
100 points if you have a plan to reward and recognize the volunteers.	

## Alliance for Biking and Walking

<b>Invited Guests and Supporters</b> <i>In the following, count only those to be contacted in person and by phone or mail, not by ads or posters.</i>	
1 point for every person you'll invite who attended your group's last special fundraising event, provided the event was considered a social success.	
1 point for every 25 people you'll invite who haven't attended a previous event, but have given your group money.	
1 point for every 50 people you'll invite who participate in or are spectators at non-fundraising public events your group holds, such as sports events, art shows, seminars, health clinics, etc, or use your facilities, or are clients/patients/service-receivers.	
1 point for every 75 people you'll invite who haven't had direct contact with your group.	
50 points if the people you'll invite or their families, are personally affected by the issues your group deals with.	
<b>Public Profile</b>	
1 point for every time your organization was mentioned positively in your community's media in the last year.	
1/2 point for every time the issues you are addressing were mentioned, but the cause was not.	
2 points for every time the media will mention your organization in a positive way as a result of this event. You may not give yourself any points for this unless you have a realistic media plan to make this happen.	
<b>Costs and Income</b>	
1 point for every \$100 of income you realistically expect.	
Deduct 1 point for every \$100 the event will cost to run.	
Add 1 point for every \$50 of in-kind donations of goods and services (not counting volunteers) you will receive to offset the costs of the event.	
Deduct 50 points if the group has to borrow the front money needed for running the event or won't have enough for the programs and projects if the event loses money.	
Add 100 points if the plan includes income from an auction or a fundraising collection using check blanks so donors can decide for themselves how much to give.	
Add 100 points if you raise more than \$50 per volunteer-hour worked.	
<b>Type of Event</b>	
Deduct 50 points for every time another group has run a similar event in your community in the last year.	
Deduct 100 points if this is a brand new event idea and you have never heard of anyone running one like it before.	
Add 25 points if the people attending the event will understand your organization's cause better afterwards.	
Add 2 points for each name and address you expect to add to your mailing list as a result of this event. Points awarded only if you will send them a fundraising appeal within 6 months at most—preferably sooner.	
Add 2 points for each potential new volunteer recruited at the event.	
Add 50 points if the event could be repeated at yearly for the next few years.	
Add 50 points if a celebrity is part of the attraction at the event.	

Add 50 points if you have given the invited guests an invisible command to attend, by honoring (or roasting) someone who is important to their financial or personal future, such as a local business leader or politician. The guest of honor must agree to attend.	
Add 50 points if what happens at the event is directly related to the work your organization does.	
Add 50 points if the event enhances your organization's image.	
Deduct 100 points if the event could possibly damage your organization's image.	
Add 75 points if more than 50% of the people who attend will want to attend another event your organization runs.	
Add 10 points each time you use one of the 8 ways a printed program can increase your effectiveness:	
1. Thanking donors and volunteers	
2. Educational material included	
3. Donation request included, with reply envelope	
4. Printing donated	
5. Asking for new volunteers	
6. Offering to contact people who want more information	
7. Asking for anonymous comments to evaluate the event	
8. Selling ads in the program	
<b>Planning</b>	
10 points for every month of advance planning time you have allowed, maximum 18 months unless you are planning to raise \$100,000 net income from a single event.	
100 points if your schedule that shows how much time each task will take and deadlines for each.	
An additional 100 points if it is possible to get all the tasks done before the event, despite the inevitable delays, without working midnight shifts. No points allowed if anyone involved shouts, cries, gets an ulcer, or burns out.	
Deduct 100 points if the lead staff person is expected to do most of the work in setting up the event—either because the volunteers are 'too busy' or because the staff person can't delegate.	
Deduct 100 points if you are planning an outdoor event and do not have a contingency plan for inclement weather.	
Deduct 50 points if you don't have volunteer follow-up crews included in your plan to clean up, send thank you letters, or handle donations and other details.	
Add 100 points if you have a sponsoring organization or company that will reduce your workload, contribute financially or increase your chances of success.	
Add 15 points if someone in your group has checked federal and municipal regulations that might affect the event and made all necessary arrangements.	
Add 25 points if you have checked to make sure there are no competing events planned during your event that could keep away your audience, such as other fundraising events.	

Add 25 points for each time you contacted other groups that have run events like this and they gave you information on how to do it right. Don't spend too much time researching—maximum 150 points.	
Add 100 points if you have consulted professional fundraisers on how best to run the event or reviewed materials on events.	
Add 200 points if you will create a workable how-to manual, so the event is easier to run next time.	
<b>YOUR TOTAL</b>	

Based on this total score, how does your planned event rate?	
Cancel the event immediately before you lose a fortune. Go back to the drawing board and correct your problems.	< 0
See less than zero (see above), but don't be as hard on yourself.	0-249
You might be able to succeed if you make some changes and are really lucky.	250-999
Your prospects look reasonable, but you'd better look after some of your shortcomings right away.	1,000-1,999
Looks pretty promising, but there's still room for improvement.	2,000-2,999
Well planned—looks like it should be a winner. But don't take any chances—review all the details.	3,000-3,999
Either you've got a great plan or you're kidding yourself. Re-evaluate some of your answers to make sure they are realistic.	4,000+

# Appendix 3: Alliance for Biking and Walking and NBDA Survey

## Alliance for Biking and Walking and NBDA Partnership Member Survey Form March 2004

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Identify the top campaign (for projects and/or policy) your organization undertook in 2003, which used promotion and media successfully. Include number of media hits and the top three promotional strategies:
  - a. Campaign name: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Media: \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Promotional strategies: \_\_\_\_\_
2. Identify the top fundraising event or ride your organization undertook in 2003: N/A
  - a. Event or ride name: \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Number of guests: \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. Budget: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
    1. Gross income: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
    2. Expenses: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
    3. Net profit: \$ \_\_\_\_\_
  - d. Total staff and volunteer time (include development, prep, event and follow up): \_\_\_\_\_
  - e. Number of media hits: \_\_\_\_\_
3. Would you like help with promotion and media strategies for campaigns? List up to three ideas (one sentence each) which you would like help with in 2004-2005.
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
4. Would you like help starting or improving a fundraising event or ride? List up to three ideas (one sentence each) which you would like help with in 2004-2005?
  - a. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. \_\_\_\_\_
  - c. \_\_\_\_\_
5. OPTIONAL—List any other favorite campaigns which used promotion and media successfully or fundraising events or rides your organization undertook that you did not mention above. Please provide the same information as requested in question #1 or #2.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

This publication was made possible by:



What does it take to put on a fundraising event?

Can a fundraising gala work for my organization?

If you work with a nonprofit organization and are looking to diversify your revenue through fundraising events, this is the book for you. Nonprofits of all types host fundraising galas that bring them money, publicity, new supporters, and good will. From awards ceremonies to sit down dinners and live and silent auctions, galas are delivering more than warm fuzzies to organizations in your community—so why not yours?

The *Alliance for Biking & Walking's Guide to Fundraising Galas* is the first book to bring you the ins and outs of organizing fundraising galas that benefit bicycling and walking. Filled with models of sample galas, and take-away tools, this *Guide* is an indispensable resource for the new or seasoned gala organizer. Although this *Guide* is written especially for bicycling and walking organizations, any nonprofit looking to benefit from fundraising galas will benefit from the best practice advice and models found here.